

CROSS PURPOSES: FRANKISH LEVANTINE PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE CRUSADES, 1147-1254.

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
in History

Department of History

University of Canterbury
2017

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Abstract

Though numerous historians have studied the participation of women in the Levantine crusades during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, few have investigated the trends in gender perceptions within the Latin states. There were dramatic societal shifts in the Latin East in this period, most significantly in the aftermath of the loss of Jerusalem in 1187. There are still many questions that remain unanswered about the effect of these social changes on perceptions of gender. The focus of this thesis has been on discerning what the Levantine Frankish perception of the female gender was before and after the cataclysmic events of 1187, and how these changes affected women's participation in crusading. This has been examined through three areas of female participation: crusade warfare, queenship in Outremer, and women's presence in political negotiations. In order to gain a grasp of the trends in perspectives of gender in each of these areas, the thesis has used a variety of narrative sources from Byzantine, Muslim, Eastern Latin, and western European authors. Though a variety of types of written material have been consulted, there was a particular focus on chronicles. This thesis has demonstrated that women living within the Latin East experienced a far greater ability to take on male-dominated gender roles during the twelfth-century than their contemporaries in Europe. However, by the thirteenth-century, the society within Outremer re-asserted many patriarchal attitudes causing women to lose the ability to shift gender roles as easily.

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Acknowledgments

This study owes a great debt of gratitude to the encouragement and knowledge of Dr. Chris Jones. I am grateful to him, not only for getting me interested in the crusades as a topic of research for my honours dissertation, but also for his tireless supervision for the last two years of my academic career at the University of Canterbury. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Tracy Adams for her enthusiasm and efforts in advising me over this thesis. She has been a positive, and invaluable member of the supervisor-dream-team and a huge help to me over the last year. Without the work of these two people, this project simply could not have been possible.

The students who I have shared offices with, notably those of the 'red-room' and the Locke Building MA office, deserve special thanks not only for peddling first-rate banter but for assisting in reading my work, critiquing my writing, and for inspiring with their overflowing passion. They will conquer more worlds than they know.

I would also like to pay tribute to the pains and labours of my parents, Karen and Paul Reynolds. Their Atlas-like support in all things has meant more to me than honey to Winnie-the-pooh. Wha's like us.

Lastly, I have to thank my partner, Anna Brow, for having the strength to listen to me prattle on about people and deeds long since past. Surely it's all worth it if I can give you a first rate tour of every castle we ever visit?

Introduction

In 1178 a member of the knights Hospitaller identified simply as Raymond recalled that in the year before, while preparing to leave Jerusalem to fight in the battle of Montgisard, 'We put the defence of the Tower of David and the whole city in the hands of our women, with many tears and indescribable wailing'.¹ If the crusaders lost the battle, then the women of Jerusalem were all that stood between Muslim forces and the holiest site in Christendom. A modern reader can scarcely fathom the significance of the burden that was placed on these women. However, this is hardly an isolated case where female participants in crusades were forced (or even expected) to step out of their traditional gender role.

This thesis will examine the period of the Second Crusade up to the Seventh and the perceptions of gender formulated within the population of the Frankish Levant during this period. The following chapters will argue that in the Latin states during the twelfth-century women had greater freedom to step out of their normal gender roles compared to their counterparts in Europe. These freedoms included, but were not limited, to greater ability to participate actively in warfare, opportunities to represent crusaders in negotiations, greater sexual freedoms, as well as a higher likelihood of owning land and thereby being in a position of leadership. It will also be argued that Frankish Levantine society's tolerance for women to deviate from their normal gender roles reached a brief peak in the years surrounding the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. Given the desperation to retain Jerusalem and the social upheaval caused by the city's capture, the opportunities for women to assume gender roles normally associated with men, such as that of leaders, negotiators, and warriors increased dramatically. It will also be argued that this rise in

¹ Raymond, 'Raymond, brother of the Hospital, to the Christian faithful (1178), Jerusalem', in trans. M. Barber, and trans. K. Bate, *Letters from the East: Crusaders, Pilgrims, and Settlers in the 12th-13th Centuries*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013, p. 72.

female freedoms was temporary and, as the thirteenth-century began, the culture within the crusader states became increasingly patriarchal. As a result of this, some aspects of Frankish Levantine society, particularly their view of queenship, became more misogynistic than then-contemporary western European culture. Whether this shift occurred due to active restrictions or through the changing political circumstances and demographics of the Latin East following the events of 1187 is difficult to ascertain. It is probable however, that Frankish Levantine society consistently held a view on the female gender that was different from the views held by those in western European society. The thesis will argue that female freedoms within the crusader states followed a bell curve, with the years either side of 1187 forming the peak of the curve. This study will demonstrate that medieval Latin peoples in the Near East underwent dramatic shifts in their perception of gender. It will become apparent that Latin States cannot be characterised as inflexibly androcentric but rather the gender roles within their societies were adaptable to a degree seldom seen in other geographic areas during the Middle Ages. Outremer's lenient attitudes to shifts in gender roles will be shown to be more characteristic of colonial societies founded throughout history.

Historiographical landscape

Understanding how women operated in the medieval world and how that world perceived their gender is of great importance both for historical study and for understanding the roots of modern day gender perceptions. However, one area of this type of historical inquiry that has not drawn a deserved level of scrutiny from modern historians is the perception of the female gender within the crusade movement. The crusading period covered over two hundred years, and recent scholarship has placed great emphasis on the influences the movement had well into the early

modern era.² Women were omnipresent on crusades, contributing to the movement as auxiliaries, as pilgrims, as leaders, as well as a plethora of other occupations. However, as Natasha Hodgson observes: 'throughout successive generations of scholarly interest, the crusades have stayed firmly entrenched within the confines of military and religious history'.³ There have been great strides forward in scholarship on gender within the context of crusading in recent years, with seminal pieces being written by the aforementioned Hodgson in addition to work by, Christoph Maier,⁴ and a collection of essays edited by Susan Edgington and Sarah Lambert.⁵ Despite this, numerous historical studies of the crusades focus on the male experience of crusading, thereby overshadowing women's participation. Giles Constable's *Crusaders and Crusading* offers one recent example of this. With regard to women involved in the First Crusade specifically, Constable states that: 'there is no evidence that any of them were crusaders in their own right'.⁶ This attitude, shared by Maureen Purcell,⁷ neglects the female contribution to the crusading movement both at home and in the Near East. Helen Nicholson has pointed out that most men were not even termed *crucesignatae*⁸ by chroniclers until the beginning of the thirteenth-century.⁹ Therefore, deeming people who were not termed *crucesignatae* to be of little significance is highly misinformed. In common with Constable's study, Jonathan Philips, in the 2014 reprint of his survey *The Crusades*:

² For the cultural affects of crusading on the early modern era, see: L. Manion, *Narrating the Crusades: Loss and Recovery in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

³ N.R. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2007, p. 1.

⁴ C.T. Maier, 'The Roles of Women in the Crusade Movement: a Survey', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2004, pp. 61-82.

⁵ B. Edgington (ed.) and S. Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001.

⁶ G. Constable, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2008, p. 103; Constable's reasoning for this statement is that he can only find evidence of one woman during the First Crusade who volunteered to go of her own accord rather than as part of a retinue or with her husband.

⁷ M. Purcell, 'Women Crusaders: a Temporary Canonical Aberration?', in L.O. Frappell (ed.), *Principalities, Powers and Estates: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Government and Society*, Adelaide, Adelaide University Union Press, 1979, p. 57.

⁸ This is a contemporary medieval-Latin literary term for a crusader.

⁹ H. Nicholson, 'Women's Involvement in the Crusades', in A. Boas (ed.), *The Crusader World*, London, Routledge, 2016, p. 56.

1095-1204, includes sparse references to women's contribution. He goes no further than stating that women did accompany crusades and tersely notes that: 'the crusade created an opportunity for the wives of participants to exercise power as regents while their husbands were away'.¹⁰ Natasha Hodgson has said that, though useful to women's studies, focusing on the arrangements made for women remaining in the West compounds 'perceptions of crusading as a male activity'.¹¹ Instead, crusading should be seen as a venture undertaken by an incredibly eclectic demographic. One possible reason for the persistent representation of the crusades as a male-only venture may be historians' inclination to approach the topic by examining the individual papal-sanctioned crusading expeditions. These expeditions were generally characterised by their martial intent. As warfare was to a large extent the domain of men, study of this area ignores the contribution of women during the intervening periods within the Latin states.

Some of the studies that have tried to redress this imbalance are themselves quite problematic. The essay collection, *Gendering the Crusades*, is a prime example of this. It is one of very few academic surveys that set out to investigate gender and crusading however, despite the title, the essays within it are not consistently devoted to the study of gender. Marcus Bull summarised this when stating: 'the collection is not primarily an exercise in the gender-theory approaches that literary scholars and those historians drawn to critical theory could apply to the materials for the crusade history'.¹² Given the limitations of much of the scholarship on gender and women in the crusades, there are gaps in the historiography waiting to be exploited. This thesis will address some of the areas that have to a large extent remained under examined.

¹⁰ J. Phillips, *The Crusades: 1095-1204*, 2nd edn, London, Routledge, 2014, p. 23.

¹¹ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, pp. 4-5.

¹² M. Bull, 'Gendering the Crusades Book Review', *English Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 476, 2003, p. 474.

The first chapter will be a historiographical study that will place the thesis within the context of women's, gender, and crusading history. The chapter will explain the current academic climate within these three distinct subjects and the works in which they intersect, such as *Gendering the Crusades*.¹³ As previously mentioned, a number of these inter-disciplinary studies have some areas that require building upon by modern historians. The chapter will establish two prominent gaps within modern historiography on the topic of women and crusading. Firstly, it will be shown that recent scholarship that approaches women's active involvement in the combat of the crusades does not make use of modern concepts on medieval gender perceptions. Secondly, while a plethora of studies of European queens and medieval queenship exist, there have been very few studies of the culture of queenship in the Frankish Levant and on whether that culture had effects on European queenship. It will become evident that because of these two historiographical gaps, there are many other unanswered questions on female life in the Latin East and on women's experience of the crusades. Namely, how well received was female leadership more broadly within the crusader states? And what opportunities did women have to take on leadership roles such as in negotiation with foreign powers? It remains unclear if the appearance of women taking on roles within crusades that were frequently considered unconventional for their gender is indicative of a wider relaxation of strict gender roles within Frankish Levantine society.

The three remaining chapters will examine these gaps in the historiography. The first will investigate the impetus for women to go on crusade and become embroiled in combat. The Frankish Levantine perspectives on women's roles in combat will be placed within the context of Muslim, Byzantine, as well as western European attitudes on this issue. In conjunction with this, the chapter will approach the potential links between women's ability to break out of their normally

¹³ Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*.

passive role in warfare and the heightened sense that the crusader states were a place where sexual freedom was much more prevalent than within other Levantine cultures, as well as contemporary European ones. The chapter will explain how these two aspects of women's ability to break boundaries imposed on their gender could indicate that the crusader states experienced a period of relaxation of strict gender roles around the period of the capture of Jerusalem in 1187. It will then be shown that the culture within the Frankish Levant became decisively more conservative within the thirteenth-century, when references to both female warriors and the lascivious culture of the Frankish Levant become sparser.

The culture of queenship within the crusader states will be explored in the third chapter of the thesis. This chapter will argue that queens within the Latin States were generally more empowered than their European counterparts during the twelfth-century and especially during the immediate aftermath of 1187. The frequency of queens ascending to the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem after this point in time rose dramatically following the turmoil of Saladin's invasions. The chapter will then show how this rise in the authority of queens in the Latin East steeply declined during the thirteenth-century, and that Frankish Levantine perceptions of queens became far more misogynistic than of their European contemporaries in this period. This will be demonstrated categorically through the divergence in depictions of queens of the Levant in manuscripts of William of Tyre's chronicle produced in the Latin east and in western Europe respectively. This chapter will also highlight the effects of the Frankish Levantine feudal system in fuelling androcentric perspectives of leadership within their society.

Finally the fourth chapter will investigate women's roles as negotiators between crusading factions as well as with non-Latin powers. This chapter will discuss the dramatic increase in the

number of references to women acting as negotiators on behalf of captured family members and leaderless factions during the period of Saladin's victory at the battle of Hattin and subsequent capture of Jerusalem. It will become clear that this was an aspect of leadership that became accessible, temporarily, to a large number of women from a variety of social standings. The character of Saladin will be placed within a context of other contemporary Muslim leaders, as his compassionate character will be shown to have played a major role in the ability of crusader women to act as negotiators. However, this chapter will not only focus on the situations in which women were forced into positions as spokeswomen due to circumstance but also the numerous situations in which they were requested to act as mediators by their crusader companions. In particular, the chapter will highlight the distinct lack of discussion within modern scholarship on the women who were used by Guy de Lusignan to help negotiate the Frankish settlement of Cyprus. As well as this, the chapter will discuss how scholarship that scrutinizes women as negotiators in the crusades is saturated with studies of Margaret of Provence. It will be shown that Margaret's role in the negotiation of the ransom of her husband Louis IX during the Seventh Crusade was an anomalous situation within the Holy Land at that time period, and that there are relatively few references to female negotiators within the major chronicles of this period. Finally, this chapter will analyse the rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary within wider Christian thought, and its effects on contemporary appreciation for the female voice within religious circles.

This thesis will not dwell on the male gender and the changes in masculinity within the Latin East.¹⁴ Predominantly, it will explore the attitudes of men and wider Frankish Levantine society towards female gender roles, and their tolerance for women breaking out of those roles. This thesis

¹⁴ For more information on masculinity and the crusades see: N. Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', in K. Hurlock (ed.) and P. Oldfield (ed.), *Crusading and Pilgrimages in the Norman World*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2015, pp. 195-214.

will not, however, go into the minutia of the occupations filled by women, as this has been the subject of other notable studies, such as that by Sabine Geldsetzer.¹⁵ It will also not offer any in depth discussion of how crusading women viewed themselves or their achievements. Such an undertaking would require far more sources written or dictated by female crusaders. A comprehensive study of female perspectives would also necessitate a much wider scope of sources and a sophisticated grasp of many more languages than the author possesses. The vast majority of the literate populous during the Middle Ages were men, as such, the bulk of writing from the period has overtly male perspectives.

Methodology

In order to address the perspectives of a medieval population, the thesis will concentrate on the use of narrative sources, particularly chronicles. Hayden White queried: 'what authority can historical accounts claim as contributions to a secured knowledge of reality in general and to human sciences in particular?'.¹⁶ The short answer to White's question is that historical accounts cannot offer any concrete knowledge of facts. Chronicles may appear to be appealing sources for gaining the facts of history, given their (mostly) chronological systematic account of events. However, their real value is not in discussions of fact, rather it is in what they can reveal of their authors' perceptions and contemporary societal expectations. In the words of Damien Kempf, 'one needs to move away from a static conception of texts as data, and consider them instead in their dynamic function as literary works, shaped by their intersection with specific actors at different times'.¹⁷

¹⁵ S. Geldsetzer, *Frauen auf Kreuzzügen*, Darmstadt, WBG, 2003.

¹⁶ H. White, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in A. Budd (ed.), *The Modern Historiography Reader, Western Sources*, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 351.

¹⁷ D. Kempf, 'Towards a Textual Archaeology of the First Crusade', in M. Bull (ed.) and D. Kempf (ed.), *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission and Memory*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2014, p. 116.

Historiography in recent decades has come to recognise the value of using chronicles to gauge medieval mind-sets.¹⁸ Chris Jones states, with regard to studies of medieval French political thought, that chronicles provide an insight into the perceptions of social groups in a way that sources composed by jurists or university masters do not.¹⁹ The use of chronicles in the study of gender is quite a recent phenomenon. The essay collection *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles* only published in 2012 was described as ‘the first book of its kind’.²⁰ However, the use of narrative sources in the study of crusading-women is not unknown. Natasha Hodgson focused on such sources in her aforementioned survey *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*.²¹ Yet, Hodgson relied heavily on sources written by Western/Latin authors. This thesis will build upon this historiography by placing the perspectives of the Frankish Levantine populous within their geographic context. The narratives of Frankish Levantine writers will not only be relied upon, but also writers from western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and Muslim Levantine cultures will be examined. Though the evidence of legal documents such as charters will be consulted, the bulk of primary source material will be narrative documents. Peter Ainsworth observes in his short study of ‘eyewitness’ chronicles that, ‘my prime aim has been to encourage readers to evaluate the historicity of the narratives discussed against their original intellectual, social, and cultural background’.²² As this thesis shall be a study of all of these facets of Frankish Levantine culture with regard to women, it is imperative to focus on sources like chronicles,

¹⁸ See: C. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England*, London, Carnegie Publishing, 2004, p. 3.

¹⁹ C. Jones, ‘Perspectives from the Periphery: French Kings and their Chroniclers’, in E. Kooper (ed.), *The Medieval Chronicle X*, Leiden, Brill, 2015, p. 88

²⁰ J. Dresvina (ed.), and N. Sparks (ed.), *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, p. 2.

²¹ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*.

²² P. Ainsworth, ‘Contemporary and “Eyewitness” History’, in D.M. Deliyannis, *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, p. 275.

which reveal much about the social mores of the period within their context. Sources such as sermons, songs, and *chansons de geste* will also be discussed however, in the words of Caroline Smith, these types of sources 'in general do not describe or relate to contemporary events but refer rather to crusades of the fictionalized or imagined past (*chansons de geste*) or to crusade projects in the future in which potential crusaders might participate'.²³ These sources will be avoided to some extent so as to maintain a clear focus on contemporaries' reception to events, rather than idealised crusading ventures.

When looking for information on women within chronicles, in the words of Katherine French: 'having found them, we now need to understand why we have found them where we did'.²⁴ With this in mind, the scholar using chronicles to study women's history must observe several caveats, because clerical men (almost exclusively) wrote them. Given their vows of chastity, many members of the clergy who wrote chronicles viewed women with some degree of suspicion²⁵ (this will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter). However, Margaret Labarge summarises the current attitude of most historians to this problem: 'too literal an acceptance of the masculine bias of most medieval thinkers is unfair [to their contemporary society]'.²⁶ This is because the majority of medieval people were not clergymen, nor aristocrats who could afford to treat women within their family as commodities. Consequently there is a large margin of interpretation when discussing medieval perceptions of gender through the medium of chronicles, and a need for a wider discourse on the topic. Chronicles form some of the best narrative sources for the events of crusade movements, particularly those by eyewitnesses. As such, the use of these sources is

²³ C. Smith, *Crusading in the Age of Joinville*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006, p. 15.

²⁴ K.L. French, 'Medieval Women's history: Sources and issues', in J.T. Rosenthal (ed.), *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using Historical Sources to Discover Medieval Europe*, London, Routledge, 2012, p. 196

²⁵ M.W. Labarge, *Women in Medieval Life: A Small Sound of the Trumpet*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1986, p. xii.

²⁶ Labarge, p. xi.

especially important for this study to gain grounding not only in gender history, but also in the crusades themselves.

Both the methodology and topic of this thesis are not especially typical of crusade studies. The crusades have been a popular topic of study for historians since the very inception of the movement, and there is a vast array of scholarly work surrounding the matter. Yet, historical investigations that are specifically devoted to women-crusaders and the reactions they elicited from their contemporaries have a much smaller body of literature. It would be fair to say that this is a budding discipline that has enjoyed a growing corpus in recent decades. The following chapter will establish the current trends in research on women-crusaders. It will become evident that this thesis will fill numerous gaps within this historiography and will form part of a web of studies that further modern understandings of women's participation in medieval crusade movements.

Chapter One: Historiography

This chapter will assess the modern historiography on the crusades, with a particular emphasis on the scholarship surrounding: women-warriors, female leaders, and queenship, as well as the gaps in the wider literature on women's history. Study of individual women-crusaders has been well established since the 1970s, however research on women-crusaders as a group has only received greater attention from historians in recent decades. This chapter will make it clear that the study of female participation in crusades should form a more integral section of the broader spectrum of medieval women's history, and greater collaboration between these disciplines could be mutually beneficial.

Modern approaches to women and the crusades

Much of modern scholarship on women-crusaders has its roots in biographies of famous medieval women. Marion Meade's 1977 biopic of Eleanor of Aquitaine, a participant in the Second Crusade, is a great example of this.²⁷ She situated Eleanor within the wider context of female crusading by naming numerous other women who swore to go on crusade, as well as pointing out that there must have been many nameless others.²⁸ Meade made insightful statements about then-current popular opinion that women-crusaders were irregularities: 'contrary to what is sometimes believed, there was nothing very unusual about a woman going on crusade'.²⁹ However, Meade's work has some shortcomings as she tried to uncover Eleanor's personality in a way that

²⁷ M. Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: a Biography*, London, Phoenix, 1977.

²⁸ Meade, p. 87.

²⁹ Meade, p. 87.

Thomas Bergin described as: ‘conjectures which do little to suspend disbelief’.³⁰ As Bergin appreciated, it is practically impossible to grasp the personalities or emotions of even the medieval elite. The method of approaching women and crusading through biographies of famous individuals has nevertheless, remained current. Bernard Hamilton produced a biography of Alice of Cyprus in the 2015 collection of essays *The Crusader World*.³¹ Hamilton explains the integral importance of Alice’s efforts relaying information during the Fifth Crusade.³² However, the main drawback of biographical literature in the discourse of female-crusaders is that it is unrepresentative. This is in part due to the focus on the lives of single individuals, but also because the vast majority of biographies of medieval people revolve around women from the highest echelons of society due to their greater visibility in sources. In order to engage with a wider demographic of crusading-women, historians have in recent decades focused on female-crusaders as a group rather than on individuals. Yet, this new phase of research into women crusaders has predominantly been applied to studies of the Latin East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Despite numerous historians, particularly Deborah Gerish,³³ noting the narrow chronological and geographic focus of the majority of studies of female crusaders,³⁴ it could be argued that such a focus is necessary in correcting the scholarship of previous decades. Christoph Maier summarised this trend when critiquing the essay collection *Gendering the Crusades*, stating

³⁰ T.G. Bergin, ‘Grande Dame, Medieval Style’, *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 86, no. 3, 1978, p. lxxvii, for an example, see: Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, p. 88, ‘at the very word *crusade*, intoxicating memories moved in her mind’.

³¹ B. Hamilton, ‘Queen Alice of Cyprus’, in Boas, *The Crusader World*, pp. 225-240.

³² Hamilton, p. 230.

³³ D. Gerish, ‘Gender Theory’, in H. Nicholson (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, p. 138.

³⁴ There are a minority of exceptions to this trend, such as: C.C. Willard, ‘Isabel of Portugal and the Fifteenth-Century Burgundian Crusade’, in B.N. Sargent-Baur (ed.), *Journeys toward God: Pilgrimage and Crusade*, Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute Publications, 1992, pp. 205-214; R. Mazeika, “‘Nowhere was the Fragility of their Sex Apparent’ Women Warriors in the Baltic Crusade Chronicles”, in A.V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095-1500*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1998, pp. 229-248.

that these essays do not incorporate the recent scholarship that demonstrates ‘the crusade to be a movement lasting well into the early modern period, one which shaped conflicts not only on the frontiers of Christian Europe’.³⁵ Marcus Bull also critiqued *Gendering the Crusades* for the same reasoning as Maier.³⁶ However, he acknowledged that ‘some of the ground covered is necessarily familiar because of the paucity and unevenness of the available evidence’.³⁷ Bull’s latter remark is crucial, as the bulk of medieval sources that discuss female participants in crusades tend to focus on the Latin East in the twelfth and thirteenth-century rather than, for example, the Baltic or Cathar crusades. As Natasha Hodgson stated, speaking on twelfth and thirteenth-century narratives: ‘they provide the most comprehensive range of perceptions about the theory and practice of crusading’.³⁸ Hodgson has also pointed out that medieval histories of the crusades in the Near East written post-thirteenth-century were not contemporaneous with the Latin occupation of the Near East and so: ‘were subsumed into family histories and popular literature, or moulded to fit the political and social situation *du jour*’.³⁹ Hodgson believes that scholarship on crusading women in the Near East has, to a large extent, been negatively influenced by this “popular literature” of the fourteenth-century. As such, focusing on the twelfth-thirteenth century Near East is necessary in applying a corrective lens to current interpretations of medieval perceptions of crusading and gender. Similarly, the study of the martial aspects of women’s involvement in crusades to the Near East has been persistently investigated yet, there is no settled consensus.

³⁵ Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 62; Though Maier’s point is pertinent, there is still a prevalent school of thought that defines the crusades by the Christian-Muslim conflicts of the High Middle Ages, see such works as: T. Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land*, London, Simon & Schuster, 2012.

³⁶ See: Bull, *English Historical Review*, p. 474.

³⁷ Bull, p. 474.

³⁸ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 9.

³⁹ Hodgson, p. 10.

Though many historians note that women were involved in other facets of crusading,⁴⁰ they habitually focus on female participation in crusade warfare. Helen Nicholson's *Women on the Third Crusade* was amongst the first to explore whether women were combatants in crusades.⁴¹ It is possible her work was a catalyst for the popularity of the topic of martial women-crusaders in recent decades. Seminal works have been published since Nicholson's study, such as Sabine Geldsetzer's book, which catalogued the occupations of women throughout the crusading period.⁴² Though incredibly useful, it predominantly focuses on their roles in times of war. Maier was among the first to raise concerns over the persistent martial slant of historical research into crusading women. He remarked that 'the crusades were fought by men *and* women, not only because some women did participate in the military campaigns but because women's involvement on the home front played a large part in making men's crusades happen'.⁴³ Though Maier is correct in his statement, there are still some actively debated topics surrounding women's involvement in crusading armies, particularly their role in combat. It is this element in particular of the discourse that this thesis will engage with. Historians like Keren Caspi-Reisfeld⁴⁴ and Ronald Finucane⁴⁵ seem convinced that warrior-women did exist. Finucane stated that 'there are clear indications that

⁴⁰ Pioneering work was done by J. Riley-Smith into women's supporting roles for crusades by spreading the popularity of crusading, see: J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 3rd edn, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 37; Maier has also investigated women's roles in propaganda, by scrutinizing the role of Catherine of Siena, a fourteenth century crusade promoter, see: Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, pp. 78-82; Riley-Smith also furthered much work on women's financial contribution to the crusade movement which has since spawned numerous sporadic publications on the topic, see: Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 129-135; P.A. Adair, ' "Ego et mea uxor..." : Countess Clemence and her Role in the Comital Family and in Flanders (1092-1133)', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, 1993; J.M. Powell, 'The Role of Women in the Fifth Crusade', in B.Z. Kedar (ed.), *The Horns of Hattin*, Jerusalem, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1992, pp. 297-298.

⁴¹ H. Nicholson, 'Women on the Third Crusade', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1997, pp. 335-349.

⁴² Geldsetzer, *Frauen auf Kreuzzügen*.

⁴³ Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 81.

⁴⁴ K. Caspi-Reisfeld, 'Women Warriors During the Crusades, 1095-1254', in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, pp. 94-107.

⁴⁵ R.C. Finucane, *Soldiers of the Faith: Crusaders and Moslems at War*, London, J.M Dent & Sons Ltd., 1983.

women sometimes took a more active part in the fighting'.⁴⁶ More recently, Niall Christie leans heavily toward the belief that any mention of women fighting, particularly by Muslim authors, was intended to deprecate the opposing group.⁴⁷ A large part of the confusion over how women participated in crusade warfare stems from a lack of discussion on gender-perceptions during the crusades.

Modern understandings of medieval perceptions of gender have mainly been gathered from study of a European context. Very few historians have explored what effect the crusades had on gender perceptions within the Latin East. This is surprising given that the study of female participation in the crusades rose in the wake of the gender and feminist studies of the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the potential exceptions to this rule are problematic. The essay collection entitled *Gendering the Crusades*⁴⁸ is one such study. It is one of very few academic surveys that set out to investigate gender and crusading however, despite the title, it is not consistently devoted to the study of gender. Marcus Bull summarised: 'the collection is not primarily an exercise in the gender-theory approaches that literary scholars and those historians drawn to critical theory could apply to the materials for the crusade history'.⁴⁹ Historians need to place greater emphasis on gender studies within the context of the crusades, so as to mediate many of the long-standing debates within the topic.

Medieval Gender Perceptions

⁴⁶ Finucane, p. 177.

⁴⁷ N. Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity's Wars in the Middle East, 1095-1382, From the Islamic Sources*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2014, pp. 83-84.

⁴⁸ Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*.

⁴⁹ Bull, *English Historical Review*, p. 474.

Medieval perceptions of gender were diverse and open to change throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The subject of this thesis is centred on women's actions and Frankish Levantine perceptions of the female gender. However, discussion of the female gender cannot be done without defining its presumed opposite: masculinity. This is especially important within the context of this thesis, as there are numerous themes to be explored that feature women adopting roles traditionally associated with the male gender. Judith Halberstam said that, 'masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects'.⁵⁰ Halberstam meant that many of the occupations that define masculinity can and have been performed by women and that sex cannot define gender. Within the medieval context, masculinity was frequently defined by actions whereas the female body and its effects were to a large extent considered the sum of womanhood.

Masculinity in the Middle Ages was predominantly expressed by the actions of the individual, most commonly in the form of martial prowess or spirituality. Ruth Karras asked: 'is [masculinity] a norm defined by what men actually do, or an ideal?'⁵¹ To a large extent the latter is true of the Middle Ages as only select groups of men, predominantly from the upper classes, became monks or knights. Herbert Sussman noted that, 'although warfare is present in almost all cultures, fighting is not necessarily the occupation of all men', yet warrior culture frequently defines masculinity.⁵² This is true of the Middle Ages as, though knights formed the professional martial caste, common men were also expected to take up arms in dire times of war.⁵³ Michael Evans has stated that

⁵⁰ J. Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1998, p. 1.

⁵¹ R.M. Karras, 'Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt: Clerical Masculinity in Medieval Europe', in L.M. Bitel (ed.), and F. Lifshitz (ed.), *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, p. 52.

⁵² H. Sussman, *Masculine Identities: The History and Meanings of Manliness*, Santa Barbara, Praeger, 2012, p. 13.

⁵³ Sussman, p. 14.

during the Middle Ages the Amazons, the warrior-women of Hellenic myth, were considered the 'epitome of unnatural conduct for women'.⁵⁴ This indicates that, to the medieval person, warfare was considered to be the domain of men alone.⁵⁵ These perceptions were by no means concrete;⁵⁶ however, martial prowess was a continuous factor in the medieval definition of manhood.⁵⁷ The other recurrent factor in medieval literature's definitions of masculinity was the act of spirituality.

Numerous historians, Edward Gibbon being the most famous example,⁵⁸ have not always appreciated that masculinity during the Middle Ages could be expressed through piety. Kate Cooper and Conrad Leyser stated that: 'far from fatally compromising the ancient tradition of civic masculinity, as Gibbon argued, the rise of ascetic Christianity led to its reconstruction and renewal in a form which would prove enduring'.⁵⁹ The ideals placed on a man who wished to be an ascetic Christian were polar opposites from those placed on a man who participated in the violent activities of a knight. Yet, both were equally seen as masculine ventures. This shows that there was flexibility in the medieval definition of masculinity. One of the more striking examples of this

⁵⁴ M.R. Evans, 'Unfit to Bear Arms: the Gendering of Arms and Armour in Accounts of Women on Crusade', in Edgington, and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 49.

⁵⁵ For more information on other medieval perceptions of differences between the genders see: C.W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, New York, Zone Books, 1991, p. 151.

⁵⁶ Hadley makes the convincing case that masculinity has consistently been reshaped and has never retained all the same definitions, see: D. M. Hadley, 'Introduction: Medieval Masculinities', in D.M Hadley (ed.), *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 2.

⁵⁷ This is clear from the continuous medieval perception of bad warriors as being effeminate, see: P. Skinner, 'Halt! Be Men!: Sikelgaita of Salerno, Gender and the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy', in S. Stafford (ed.), and B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *Gendering the Middle Ages*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁸ Gibbon felt that civic duty and military service were the markers of the masculinity of antiquity, and the rise of Christianity brought about its downfall, see: E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, M.F. Guizot (ed.), Cincinnati, J.A. James, 1840, p. 170.

⁵⁹ K. Cooper and C. Leyser, 'The Gender of Grace: Impotence, Servitude, and Manliness in the Fifth-Century West', in Stafford and Mulder-Bakker, *Gendering the Middle Ages*, p. 19.

flexibility is in the medieval expectation that male members of the clergy practice chastity.⁶⁰ Some historians have however, hypothesised that medieval people considered chaste clerical men to have transcended masculinity. In so doing they became a more ethereal, spiritually enlightened, third gender.⁶¹ Conversely, the female gender was invariably defined by the physicality of women. Vern Bullough came to this conclusion when quoting the 'officially incorporated' Christian doctrine of St. Jerome, which stated: '[as] long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from men as body is from the soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called a man'.⁶²

These medieval understandings of the female gender have their root in medical concepts from antiquity. The teachings of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen became influential after being re-introduced to Europe following their rediscovery within Greek and Arabic sources during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶³ One example of Aristotle's misogyny can be seen in *Politics*: 'the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled'.⁶⁴

Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset firmly believed that: 'Aristotle's writings contributed to

⁶⁰ Bullough points out the contrast as secular society defined masculinity by sexual capability, see: V.L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in C.A. Lees (ed.), *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 43.

⁶¹ Swanson said that male religious attained a status of 'emasculinity', see: R.N. Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation', in Hadley, *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, p. 161; more recently historians such as Murray have described religious people, monks and nuns, as having formed a 'third gender', see: J. Murray, 'One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?', in Bitel and Lifshitz, *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, p. 41; Counter to these claims, Ruth Karras has stated that introducing the concept of a third gender over-complicates the issue, deviating from the binary view of gender espoused by medieval contemporaries, see; Karras, *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, pp. 52-53.

⁶² Bullough, *Medieval Masculinities*, p. 32; see also: Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 171; M. Warner stated that medieval people saw men as the spiritual gender and women as the physical, see: M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 71.

⁶³ W.F. MacLehose, 'Aristotelian Concepts of Women and Gender', in M. Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 35.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics and the Constitution of Athens*, S. Everson (ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, bk. I, p. 17.

the implanting among intellectuals and in popular awareness the idea of woman's inferiority'.⁶⁵ However, Elizabeth Robertson wrote, with derisive undertones, that the idea that, 'women were defined in the Middle Ages by their bodies has become almost a commonplace in studies of medieval concepts of gender'.⁶⁶ Robertson puts more emphasis on the effect of theological commentaries on medieval perceptions of womanhood. Her views are possibly influenced by the knowledge that Aristotle's writings only became widespread in Europe in the late thirteenth-century. Yet, there were numerous other views from antiquity similar to Aristotle's circulating in medieval Europe before this, such as espoused by the Classical physician, Galen. Comments like Robertson's fail to appreciate that, to the medieval mind, medicine and spirituality were not as clearly separated as they are today. The health of the soul was considered as equally influential as the health of the body. The concepts of the medieval scientific and ecclesiastical communities reinforced each other with writings on the flawed physiology and spirituality of women. Despite the plethora of written evidence of these misogynistic ideas, it is hard to determine how much of this rhetoric was believed by medieval women.

One of the central themes within studies of medieval perceptions of gender is an acute awareness by historians of how unrepresentative the bulk of medieval writing is about women. During the Middle Ages the vast majority of the literate population of Europe were male members of the clergy or aristocracy. Eileen Power stated: 'ideas about women were formed on the one hand by the clerkly order, usually celibate, and on the other hand by a narrow caste, who could

⁶⁵ D. Jacquart and C. Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Adamson, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988, p. 195.

⁶⁶ E. Robertson, 'Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality in the *Ancrene Wisse* and Julian of Norwich's *Showings*', in L. Lomperis (ed.), and S. Stanbury (ed.), *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 142.

afford to regard its women as an ornamental asset'.⁶⁷ According to Margaret Labarge, the opinions of the clerical writers particularly were generally characterised by the perception of 'women as threats to their chastity'.⁶⁸ Deborah Gerish described the religious affiliation of clerical writers as the 'fourth factor', which influenced medieval perceptions of gender (the other three in her view being: race, class, and sex).⁶⁹ As this minority group within society was almost exclusively the only literate one, these misogynistic thoughts have been preserved far better than any others. It is often hard therefore, for historians to gauge how the majority of medieval society viewed the female gender. However, Jacqueline Murray warns that 'our historical vantage point blinds us... rather than a monolithic "medieval view," a monovocalic discourse of misogyny, there was a diversity of opinion'.⁷⁰

The diversity of medieval opinions on gender during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has seldom been the focus of modern historians. A disproportionate amount of scholarly debate on medieval gender perceptions centres on whether women's position in society changed following the Black Death of the fourteenth century.⁷¹ This debate completely overlooks any possible shifts in the twelfth or thirteenth-century. Within this discourse numerous historians, with the exception of individuals like Arlyn Diamond,⁷² have noted a lack of license among medieval women to actively rise above the status quo of patriarchal social constructs. Individuals such as

⁶⁷ E. Power, *Medieval Women*, M.M. Postan (ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Labarge, *Women in Medieval Life*, p. xii.

⁶⁹ Gerish, *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, p. 132.

⁷⁰ J. Murray, 'Thinking about Gender: The Diversity of Medieval Perspectives', in J. Carpenter (ed.) and S.B. MacLean (ed.), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1995, pp. 2-3.

⁷¹ For more information on what Stephen Rigby termed the 'pessimistic' and 'golden age' schools of thought, see: S.H. Rigby, 'Gendering the Black Death: Women in Later Medieval England', in Stafford and Mulder-Bakker, *Gendering the Middle Ages*, pp. 218-219.

⁷² See: A. Diamond, 'Chaucer's Women and Women's Chaucer', in A. Diamond (ed.) and L.R. Edwards (ed.), *The Authority of Experience: Essays in Feminist Criticism*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1977, p. 64.

Caroline Bynum,⁷³ Marina Warner,⁷⁴ and Vern Bullough⁷⁵ all agree that at least by the later Middle Ages, many literate women internalised and regurgitated the misogyny of their time within their writings. Similarly, Kowaleski and Bennet stated that though most 'women's work' in the Middle Ages was low-skilled and low-status, 'even skilled women's occupations often failed to organize into guilds'.⁷⁶ Stephen Rigby even remarked that though women had accumulated greater economic control following the fourteenth century, their political power and legal rights remained the same, meaning: 'they were singularly ill-equipped to defend themselves'.⁷⁷ Instead of questioning whether medieval women were capable of effecting social change, a more probing question might be whether they felt the treatment of their gender needed to change. The difficulty in assessing this question is in quantifying how much of the misogynistic rhetoric espoused about the female gender was actually heard, believed, or internalised by medieval women.

Historians have frequently debated this issue. Barbara Newman pointed out that 'spiritual writers drew on this [misogynistic] tradition offhandedly as a source of metaphors, regardless of the gender of their audience'.⁷⁸ Though very few women could read during the Middle Ages, it is highly possible they were read to, and were exposed to an excess of anti-feminist rhetoric. Bynum reflected on historians who assume that women did internalise this culture and stated: 'behind such suggestions lies an even more basic assumption – that is, that the image of woman in the later Middle Ages is primarily an aspect of, and an influence on, the history of women'.⁷⁹ She

⁷³ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p.171.

⁷⁴ Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 71.

⁷⁵ Bullough, *Medieval Masculinities*, p. 32.

⁷⁶ M. Kowaleski and J.M. Bennet, 'Crafts, Guilds, and Women in the Middle Ages: Fifty Years after Marian K. Dale', *Signs*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1989, p. 475.

⁷⁷ Rigby, *Gendering the Middle Ages*, p. 218.

⁷⁸ B. Newman, 'Flaws in the Golden Bowl: Gender and Spirituality Formation in the Twelfth Century', *Traditio*, vol. 45, no. 1, 1989, p. 115.

⁷⁹ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 152.

argues that the twelfth to fifteenth centuries saw a large increase in ‘positive female figures and feminine metaphors’, within religious writings.⁸⁰ Bynum suggests that medieval perceptions of the female gender were far more complex than a simple dichotomous relationship with the male gender. The prospect that historians fail to appreciate a more complex gender relationship existing in the Middle Ages is wholly possible. However, Bynum concluded: ‘in the lives of female saints, sin “usually appears to arise from the depths of woman herself”... such evidence suggests that women had a greater sense of interior motivation and of continuity of self’.⁸¹ Yet, if female spirituality was evoked from reasons internalised from, “the depths of woman herself,” this could just have easily been from negative feelings reinforced by the patriarchal society they lived in. In the words of Julie Miller, historians should be mindful that their analyses ‘do not inadvertently ignore or reinscribe the very patriarchal values and ideologies we are critiquing’.⁸²

Like all historians investigating medieval women’s understandings of their society, Bynum was only able to cite literate women as evidence for her interpretation, although they formed a minute section of society. The opinion of these writers offers little in understanding whether the bulk of the female population internalised the misogyny that they were exposed to. There is a culture of essentialism at play within the literature surrounding this topic. Instances of medieval female writers using explicit anti-feminist metaphors and phrases are frequently cited as examples of internalised hatred. However, very few, (if any) historians explicitly state what qualifies as the manifestation of female internalised misogyny. It is rare to see modern commentators exploring

⁸⁰ Bynum, p. 152.

⁸¹ Bynum, p. 177.

⁸² J.B. Miller, ‘Eroticized Violence in Medieval Women’s Mystical Literature: A Call for a Feminist Critique’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1999, p. 49.

whether the medieval female populace casually accepted the anti-feminist ideas that pervaded their society, and what affect this had as a social control.

Evidently there is an eclectic discourse on how the medieval person perceived gender and how those perceptions manifested themselves. There is some consensus among historians that ideas surrounding gender only began to shift during the fourteenth century. Many historians are confident that in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries much of the patriarchal constructs that dominated the medieval age were formed and thrived yet few have questioned whether there was much variation in this androcentric culture in different geographic areas. As well as this, many modern concepts of medieval gender perceptions have not been so actively applied to the context of the crusades in the Near East. Jo Ann McNamara said: 'not only is gender a useful analytical tool for historians, but history is indispensable to understanding gender'.⁸³ However, the studies of gender examined above tend to perceive the Black Death as one of the few historical events that had a direct influence on gender relations within medieval Europe. With the obvious exception of the essay collection *Gendering the Crusades* and Deborah Gerish's work, there seems to be a hole in the gender discourse concerning the crusades. The opportunities that the crusades offered women to break out of their gender roles are an under-examined subject and one that this study will in part rectify. If the crusades do not heavily feature in studies of gender, this raises the question, where do the crusades fit in the wider discourse of women's history?

Crusades and the Wider Discourse on Medieval Women's history

⁸³ J.A. McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150', in Lees, *Medieval Masculinities*, p. 3.

The popularity of crusade studies within the wider spectrum of women's history is ever changing. The direction of research into women's history fluctuates and with it the popularity of specific topics. There are, however, some broad and persistent trends within the historiography of women's history. Historians frequently divide their studies into three groups: women's position in the family, position in religious life, and their claims to property. Eileen Power said that the difficulty in studying women was establishing 'what in any age constitutes the position of women'.⁸⁴ This is predominantly due to the limited references to women in contemporary written accounts. This problem is endemic whether studying women in Western Europe or the pilgrims who immigrated to the Near East. This is further complicated by the limited glimpses of female voices in medieval literature, such as the writings of Hildegard von Bingen, Christine de Pizan, or even the fictional wife of Bath in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.⁸⁵ However, one relatively untapped avenue for study of medieval women is through approaching historical events in female terms. Incidents like the crusades are just one of the events gaining the attention of historians to be explored through female experiences. When studying women's participation in the crusades, the logical initial question might be: what were their reasons for participating? The most obvious and pervasive reason for medieval people to take the cross was their deep-seated religious beliefs. Nothing was more omnipresent in medieval European culture than Christianity. As such, female positions in religious life are an area of constant study for historians of medieval women. However, the majority of the literature that applies to female monasticism/spirituality does not incorporate crusading.

There has been a consistent inclination for historians to study medieval female religious, particularly the lives of nuns. This is evident by regular publications on the topic since the 1980s

⁸⁴ Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 1.

⁸⁵ G. Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, J. Mann (ed.), London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2005, pp. 211-255.

such as the essays edited by Nichols and Shank⁸⁶, all the way up to the last decade with *Medieval Holy Women*, the essay collection edited by Minnis and Voaden.⁸⁷ Coverage of nunneries forms an almost obligatory section for such studies. During the Middle Ages, nuns predominantly came from noble families so their experiences were more commonly recorded.⁸⁸ Therefore, historians studying medieval female religious are frequently drawn to examining them.⁸⁹ Barbara Newman drew comparisons between the monastic life of a nun and the heroine of romance. Both must sit and wait to be saved, the former for salvation and the latter for true love. Newman stated that nuns' lives were: 'a static perfection rather than a quest'.⁹⁰ By that, she meant that a nun began her career in the monastery and ended it in much the same circumstances both physically and spiritually. It is possible Newman was arguing that, in comparison to men, the female clergy might not have felt as much need to strive to rise above their station to attain salvation. Even if this was the case, this analysis only applies to nuns, a very small proportion of the female population. There are obvious links between the study of religious women and study the crusades. Scholarship that incorporates both these disciplines could yield far better representation of how the bulk of medieval women viewed and practiced spirituality.

Given the highly religious orientation of medieval society it is likely that numerous women partook in the crusades, inspired by religious fervour. Contrary to the mostly static life of the nun,

⁸⁶ J.A. Nichols (ed.) and L.T. Shank (ed.), *Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women, Volume One*, Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1984.

⁸⁷ A. Minnis (ed.) and R. Voaden (ed.), *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition c.1100-c.1500*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010.

⁸⁸ One of the few options in life open to an aristocratic woman other than marriage was joining a nunnery, and as Power notes, many noble families deposited their daughters in nunneries in order to avoid paying for dowries, 'the evidence of medieval wills shows how useful nunneries could be to an upper-class family, with several sons to put into the world and daughters to dower', see: Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 81

⁸⁹ Labarge said that this as an inevitability because nobles, 'were the most visible and their activities more fully recorded', see: Labarge, *Women in Medieval Life*, p. 15.

⁹⁰ Newman, *Traditio*, p. 143.

one of the main characteristics of lay-piety was pilgrimage, and there was no greater pilgrimage than to Jerusalem.⁹¹ Discussion of female pilgrimage inevitably involves coverage of mystic and ascetic female pilgrims, although it has been suggested that this too may have been a predominantly upper class expression of devotion.⁹² Many historians who study female pilgrimage tend to focus on those that took place after the crusading era, particularly the rise of female pilgrimage in the fifteenth century. Clarissa Atkinson is one such historian. She cites works such as the 1357 book *Mandeville's Travels* as being influential in this spike in female travellers.⁹³ However, the scholars that do include women-crusaders in their discussion of pilgrimage tend to keep their analysis quite superficial. Sylvia Schein for instance, includes references to crusader-women to give context in her 19XX article.⁹⁴ Schein, like many others, is not able to go into great depth of analysis of these pilgrims, given the tenuous evidence for the motivations for female participation in crusades. One frequently speculated reason for female participation in the crusades was to accompany members of their family who took crusading vows, and yet scholars of the family construct also frequently ignore the crusades in their studies.

The history of women within European family life is a common topic for modern scholarship and undoubtedly of use to crusade historians. Georges Duby stressed the importance of study of family ties in the Middle Ages when he stated that further investigation 'needs to be woven into the main fabric of social history to provide perspective'.⁹⁵ In the pre-industrial medieval world the family dynamic dominated domestic production of goods, early education, social standing and the

⁹¹ S. Schein, 'Bridget of Sweden, Margery Kempe and Women's Jerusalem Pilgrimages in the Middle Ages', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 48.

⁹² See R. Stark, 'Upper Class Asceticism: Social Origins of Ascetic Movements and Medieval Saints', *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2003, p. 7.

⁹³ C.W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983, p. 52-53.

⁹⁴ Schein, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, pp. 47-48.

⁹⁵ G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan, London, Edward Arnold, 1977, p. 134.

demographics of communities (Scottish clans are a prime example of the latter).⁹⁶ In short, family mattered to the medieval person and women found themselves viewed as synapses in the transmission of both cultural and material assets. As such, numerous historians approach women in the Middle Ages in relation to their family station. Henrietta Leyser explains that: 'medieval women were classified according to their sexual status: men might be thought of collectively as knights, merchants, crusaders; women were virgins, wives or widows'.⁹⁷ Scholars of women-crusaders have been quick to engage with this discourse and the discoveries of historians of the medieval family. Natasha Hodgson's work for instance, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, organises its study of the female experience of the crusades by dividing women into: daughters, wives, mothers, and widows, in keeping with Leyser's deductions.⁹⁸ Yet, this does not necessarily mean that study of the crusades is crucial to unlocking new information about medieval family life. Women linked to the crusades were no less governed by their kinship than other women of the time period; however, there is a distinct lack of representation of the crusades within the historiography on family constructs.

An extension of studies of women and their role within the family is the examination of their connection to property and the sway they held over it. As Kristen Fenton said: 'historians have long acknowledged that access to and control of property are crucial factors in determining the structure and extent of female power'.⁹⁹ There is still lively debate over whether women's power and economic privileges were diminished following the eleventh century's slow cultural shift toward

⁹⁶ J. Goody, *The European Family*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 61.

⁹⁷ H. Leyser, *Medieval Women: a Social History of Women in England 450-1500*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995, p. 93, see also: S. Bardsley, *Woman's Roles in the Middle Ages*, London, Greenwood Press, 2007, p. 91.

⁹⁸ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*.

⁹⁹ K.A. Fenton, 'Women, Property, and Power: Some Examples from Eleventh-Century Rouen Cartularies', in L.V. Hicks (ed.) and E. Brenner (ed.), *Society and Culture in Medieval Rouen, 911-1300*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, p. 228.

primogeniture. Historians such as Jack Goody and Georges Duby believed that such a limitation in female authority did occur. Prior to the thirteenth-century, there were still relatively strict social divisions between the castle-owning upper-aristocracy and the knightly class. Duby explains that in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries these two classes began to fuse.¹⁰⁰ The lesser nobles began addressing themselves with loftier titles and became increasingly concerned with land. As a consequence of this, the noble classes felt a need to consolidate their power and not divide up their property amongst younger sons or daughters. This shift toward primogeniture meant that the inheritance of land by a daughter would be lost to the man she married, therefore diminishing the family demesne. Jack Goody termed this culture the 'hidden economy of kinship'.¹⁰¹

The belief that the decline in female inheritance rights dramatically marginalized women may have been a common perception in the 1960s-80s. However, recent historians such as the aforementioned Kristen Fenton, as well as Susan Johns¹⁰² and Shulamith Shahar¹⁰³ doubt it had the impact previously believed. Johns in particular, categorically stated: 'the place of noblewomen in the twelfth-century was not marginalised by the increasing shift to patrilineal primogeniture'.¹⁰⁴ This new wave of thought could be supported and extended by research into the effect of the crusades on women. Women frequently took a custodial role over land belonging to male relatives while those men were on crusade. If those men were killed, their female family members were likely to inherit the land.¹⁰⁵ This was especially true of lands acquired in the Near East. Christoph

¹⁰⁰ Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, p. 178.

¹⁰¹ J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 183-185.

¹⁰² S.M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003.

¹⁰³ S. Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, trans. C. Galai, New York, Routledge, 1983.

¹⁰⁴ Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁵ See: Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 129-130, 135, 138-139.

Maier determined that this topic has been 'investigated systematically in only a few isolated studies'.¹⁰⁶ This thesis will address this gap by investigating the links between women's higher likelihood of inheriting property in the Near East and their greater ability to take on roles in leadership, negotiation, and ultimately supersede their male contemporaries.

Another aspect of female leadership during the crusades that has been under examined is the culture of queenship in the Latin East and the impact that it had on queenship in western Europe. Excepting a few scattered studies,¹⁰⁷ scholarship of European queens has dominated the discourse on medieval queenship. Numerous individual queens of the Kingdom of Jerusalem have received close scrutiny yet there is a dearth of examinations of queens in the Latin East as a demographic. It is possible that this is due to a culture of indifference among historians toward female leadership in the crusades or a perception that female regency in the Latin states had no lasting influence on the wider culture of medieval queenship. Regardless of reasoning, there is a clear gap in the historiography. Labarge, for instance, makes no mention of any queens of the Latin states in her discussion of medieval queenship.¹⁰⁸ This is surprising given that contemporary Europeans were certainly aware and interested in queens in Outremer. Jaroslav Floda argues convincingly that this was the case when he examined the high number of illustrations of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem produced in European-made copies of *Histoire d'Outremer*.¹⁰⁹ As Robert Bucholz and Carole Levin said on queenship, there was 'more continuity than has generally been

¹⁰⁶ Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁷ See: S. Lambert, 'Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118-1228', in A. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1997, pp. 153-169; B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100-1190)', *Studies in Church History Subsidia*, vol. 1, no. 7, 1978, pp. 143-174.

¹⁰⁸ Labarge, *Women in Medieval Life*, pp. 44-71; one good example of an exception to this wider trend can be seen in: E. Woodacre, 'Questionable Authority: Female Sovereigns and Their Consorts in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles', in Dresvina and Sparks, *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, pp. 376-406.

¹⁰⁹ J. Floda, 'Images of Queen Melisende in Manuscripts of William of Tyre's History of Outremer: 1250-1300', *Gesta*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1993, p. 98.

seen... [because] queens themselves “talked” to each other, either literally... or figuratively across time’.¹¹⁰ Therefore, further study of the culture of queenship in the crusader states would be pertinent to understanding how medieval queenship more generally developed. This is also a topic that this thesis will directly engage with in the chapter devoted to Latin queenship.

The bulk of studies on women in the middle ages do not directly engage with the crusades. The reason for this is that most studies of women do not focus on specific events but rather the broad trends in women’s history. This is not to say that the crusades have no place in such studies. The crusading era lasted for centuries; it is fair to say that this does not constitute an anomalous event but rather a consistent culture, and one that effected women from all over western Europe and beyond. As such, the crusades deserve greater integration into studies of women’s history. Though there is growing scholarly debate involving female-crusaders such as the essays edited by Edgington and Lambert,¹¹¹ studies such as these are not being fully utilised by the wider spectrum of women’s studies.

This chapter has established numerous gaps within the historiography, many of which will be addressed within this thesis. There are three main areas that this thesis will in part address. Firstly, there is already a large amount of scholarship on medieval queenship. Yet, this discussion of queenship has for the most part ignored queens of the Latin East, and any possible influences this group had on the culture of queenship in the wider medieval world. Secondly, women’s property rights and position within family constructs were directly linked to their ability to take on positions

¹¹⁰ R. Bucholz and C. Levin, ‘It’s Good to Be Queen’, in R. Bucholz (ed.), and C. Levin (ed.), *Queens & Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2009, p. xiv.

¹¹¹ Edgington and S. Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*.

of leadership. There is already a large body of scholarship on both these areas, but again, these works focus excessively on a European context. There is an opportunity to explore women's property rights in Outremer, as well as their position within noble family constructs. By broadening the study of women's access to property, women's heightened ability to take on positions of leadership within the crusades can be further explained. Lastly, the discourse on whether women fought in the crusades is vague and underutilises modern research on medieval perceptions of gender. Further research on women-warriors and the perception of them by contemporaries could shed greater light on the, already well-documented, fluidity of medieval gender roles. This latter gap in the historiography shall be the first avenue this thesis explores.

Chapter Two: Sex & Swords

War and the Crusades, a Means of Emancipation

Historians frequently acknowledge that there was a plethora of reasons that motivated men to participate in the crusades. While describing the motivations of the pilgrims of the First Crusade, Thomas Asbridge said: 'it would be a gross oversimplification to suggest that such a host of individuals might be driven by a single set of beliefs'.¹¹² These incentives included the possibility of spiritual salvation and, the acquisition of wealth and land. This chapter will ascertain whether women saw the crusades as a means to transform not only their spiritual or financial position but their social position as well.¹¹³ Many have recognised that Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187 was a watershed moment in crusading history. It initiated the Third Crusade but also catalysed a lasting shift in crusading tactics. A much more militarised crusading movement began in the period after 1187 with the ultimate goal of recapturing Jerusalem.¹¹⁴ It is possible that tactical shifts were not the only consequences of Jerusalem's fall. I will argue that social shifts occurred simultaneously, which affected the way contemporary Latins viewed and valued female participation in crusades, causing a brief but significant rise in the number of female participants in crusading warfare. It will also be reasoned that during this time-period, women looked upon the crusades as a means to emancipate themselves, and following their participation in crusading they were accorded more sexual freedoms within Frankish Levantine society than their European counterparts. As crusading became more militarised in the thirteenth-century however, women may have been discouraged

¹¹² T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, London, The Free Press, 2004, p. 41.

¹¹³ For more on women's incentives for crusading see: R. Pernoud, *Femme au Temps des Croisades*, Paris, Stock, 1990.

¹¹⁴ For more on this shift see: C. Libertini, 'Practical Crusading: The Transformation of Crusading Practice 1095-1221', in M. Balard (ed.), *Autour de la Première Croisade. Actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996, pp. 281-291.

from participating, and the freedoms they had within Outremer's society diminished. This chapter will establish: what boundaries women broke during crusades, how gender perceptions were altered as a result of their participation, and how Byzantine and Muslim commentators reacted to the female presence amongst the crusaders. However, it would be misleading to present women-warriors as being isolated to the crusades.

Licence, Incentives, and Barriers broken

Incidents of women taking part in combat are recorded in numerous campaigns and locations across medieval Europe. James Illston's study notes a myriad of examples of such women.¹¹⁵ One stark example of a warrior-woman can be seen in the Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*. She recounts how Sikelgaita of Salerno (d.1090) went on campaign with her husband Robert Guiscard, frequently wore armour,¹¹⁶ and even rallied fleeing troops during a battle.¹¹⁷ Anna depicts Sikelgaita as being braver than the Sicilian-Norman troops, undoubtedly intending to deprecate them; yet, it is not impossible that Sikelgaita really did take an active role in the battle. Another particularly famous example of a warrior-woman would be Matilda of Tuscany (d.1115), who was a famed military strategist and leader, though not a combatant.¹¹⁸ Women were also depicted fighting in fictional literature such as the *Chanson de Geste* of Aiol, in which the character Mirabel kills a brigand with a Danish axe.¹¹⁹ However, these women were considered fascinating by their contemporaries because they were

¹¹⁵ See J.M. Illston, 'An Entirely Masculine Activity? Women and War in the High and Late Middle Ages Reconsidered', Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2009, pp. 46-89.

¹¹⁶ Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter, London, Penguin Books Ltd., 1969, bk. I, p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Anna quotes Sikelgaita as crying out to the Norman soldiers: ' "how far will ye run? Halt! Be men!"... She grasped a long spear and charged full gallop against them', see: Komnene, *The Alexiad*, bk. IV, p. 121.

¹¹⁸ See D.J. Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa, 1046-1115*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008.

¹¹⁹ *Aiol: A Chanson de Geste*, trans. S.C. Malicote and trans. A.R. Hartman, New York, Italica Press, 2014, pp. 151-153, vv. 5979- 6042.

anomalous. As Patricia Skinner put it, Anna Komnene's description of Sikelgaita creates 'the image of a Valkyrie-like woman who defied gendered roles some twenty years before the crusades made warlike women a more visible (and fashionable?) phenomenon'.¹²⁰

Skinner's point, that warrior-women are far more visible in medieval crusade literature, is an accurate one but also paradoxical. War was pervasive all across Europe in the Middle Ages, and women were regularly exposed to it. There were also proportionally far more women who remained in Europe than went on the crusades. Yet, there are far more references to women fighting in crusade warfare than European secular warfare. If crusading exposed women to more warfare than they would have experienced in Europe, that would account for the noticeably higher number of references to women involved in crusade warfare. However, this is too simplistic a theory, as warfare was a constant and unavoidable facet of European medieval life. It is more likely that women on crusade sought to help in the fighting more frequently than their European-resident counterparts. Megan McLaughlin said that when studying a society's perspectives on people who assume gender roles not normally associated with their sex: 'such reactions provide us with a great deal of information not only about the definition and theoretical limits of acceptable behaviour, but also about the conditions under which deviation from such behaviour will be tolerated'.¹²¹ It is possible that given the religious significance of the crusades contemporaries saw the movement as a situation where it was tolerable for women to participate in male gendered roles like that of the warrior.

¹²⁰ Skinner, *Gender & History*, p. 623.

¹²¹ M. McLaughlin, 'The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe', *Women's Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1990, pp. 193-194.

This proposition is supported by the high number of references to women combatants in crusade warfare compared to the small proportion of women who went on crusade. There are no concrete figures for the number of female participants in the crusades of the twelfth-century, but James Powell calculates that of the eight hundred named participants in the Fifth Crusade (1213-1221), three per cent were women.¹²² In a similar study Benjamin Kedar stated that of four hundred and fifty-three crusaders recorded aboard the ship *St. Victor* traveling to the Levant in 1250 to join Louis IX, 'there were 42 women... i.e., 9.3% of the total'.¹²³ Evidently, the proportions of women who were involved in crusades were much smaller than the proportions of women living within medieval Europe. As Christoph Maier has pointed out, the figures presented by Powell and Kedar are not necessarily representative of all crusades,¹²⁴ and Powell's census mainly concerns people who contemporaries deemed worthy of mentioning, i.e. nobles. Also, Kedar notes that by the thirteenth-century, 'the role of the popular element on the crusades was diminishing'.¹²⁵ This meant that crusading incorporated far fewer pilgrims and women.¹²⁶ Yet, there clearly were women still traveling to the Levant in this period, and there would have been higher proportions of women within twelfth-century crusading armies. Though not highly representative, the percentages presented by Kedar and Powell give some indication of the small proportion of women travelling on crusades. Despite the paucity of figures for women who went on crusade, it appears that many of them went of their own accord.

¹²² J.M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade 1213-1221*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986, p. 167.

¹²³ B.Z. Kedar, 'The Passenger List of a Crusader Ship, 1250: Towards the History of the Popular Element on the Seventh Crusade', *Studi Medievali*, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 272.

¹²⁴ Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 74.

¹²⁵ Kedar, *Studi Medievali*, p. 279.

¹²⁶ Contemporaries like Geoffrey de Villehardouin corroborate views like this. Geoffrey said of the army during the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), 'no one has ever seen an army more impressive or with so many combatants [i.e. men]', see: Geoffrey de Villehardouin, 'The Conquest of Constantinople', in trans. C. Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, London, Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 18.

Kedar states that of the forty-two women listed amongst the passengers of the ship *St. Victor*, twenty-two 'have no male chaperons'.¹²⁷ There are numerous examples of women taking the cross on their own. Jacques de Vitry states that in 1216 his horses were requisitioned by a group of Genoese troops. While left stranded he preached the Fifth Crusade to an audience of Genoese women: 'a multitude of wealthy and noble women received the sign of the cross: the burghers took my horses and I made their wives crusaders'.¹²⁸ Women are also described by some sources as having gone on crusade with distinct martial intent. The Lyon *Eracles* states that not long after the death of her husband, Margaret of France travelled to the Holy Land in 1197 and brought with her: 'a fine company of [German] knights... [and] imagined that with the arrival of the Germans, the city of Jerusalem would be won back'.¹²⁹ It is impossible to ascertain whether Margaret was personally leading her company of knights or whether she intended to command them in the imminent siege of Jerusalem she envisaged, as she died eight days after her arrival in Outremer. A Muslim contemporary, Ibn al-Athir, also describes a crusading woman leading troops on her own. He states that, 'a queen of the Franks from beyond the seas set out with about 1,000 soldiers and was captured in the vicinity of Alexandria'.¹³⁰ Imād al-Dīn's description of this elusive female war leader shows her exhibiting far more licence in engaging in warfare. He stated that she went into battle with five hundred knights who, 'rode at her side, attacking when she attacked, rushing when she did,

¹²⁷ Kedar, *Studi Medievali*, p. 272. The author of the manuscript explicitly stated who each of the passengers were traveling with, and who was traveling alone.

¹²⁸ Jacques de Vitry, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/1170-1240) évêque de Saint-Jean-d'Acre, Edition Critique*, R.B.C. Huygens (ed.), Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1960, p. 77: *Multitudo autem mulierum divitum et nobilium signum cruces receipt: cives michi equos abstulerunt, et ego uxores eorum cruce signavi*. Analysis by J.M. Powell, *The Crusades, The Kingdom of Sicily, and the Mediterranean*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2007, p. 107.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, 'The Old French Continuation of William of Tyre, 1184-97', in trans. P.W. Edbury (ed.), *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation*, Farnham, Ashgate, Publishing Ltd., 1998, p. 143.

¹³⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2: The Years 541-589/1146-1193: The Age of Nur al-Din and Saladin*, trans. D.S. Richards, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010, p. 378; Nicholson has pointed out however, that Ibn al-Athir's anecdote: 'seems to be a combination of half-remembered stories of Imād al-Dīn's history... the capture of this European queen is not mentioned... by any European source', see: Nicholson, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 340.

and standing firm as long as she did'.¹³¹ It is conceivable that both these Muslim accounts are embellished versions of the events surrounding Margaret of France's final days, however, the influences on Muslim writers' descriptions of crusading women will be discussed in due course.

One potential reason, relatively under examined in modern historiography, influencing these women to get involved in crusade warfare may have been a belief that crusading offered a means to escape some of the constraints imposed on their gender in Europe. It is difficult to quantify whether the bulk of women who went on crusade did so believing they would receive a higher quality of life within society after having contributed to a crusade. However, the women who settled in the Levant may have enjoyed more freedoms than their contemporaries in Europe. There are numerous references by eyewitnesses to the sexual laxity amongst crusader armies.¹³² This certainly preyed on the conscience of Christian contemporaries and commentators, as will be discussed. Concurrently, numerous Muslim writers derisively mention a lascivious culture amongst Levantine Franks. It is possible that these insults may have had some grounding in truth: Frankish Levantine culture may have been more sexually liberated than European or Islamic culture. This sexual liberty may have been a symptom of a culture in which women enjoyed new freedoms from many of the patriarchal social controls imposed within the rest of Christendom.

Travel, during the Middle Ages, was often considered synonymous with a relaxation of social mores, particularly sexual ones. Writing to Cuthbert the Archbishop of Canterbury in 747, Boniface of Wessex stated that women frequently undertook pilgrimages to Rome, but: 'few keep their virtue... there are very few towns in Lombardy or Frankland or Gaul where there is not a courtesan

¹³¹ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 'al-Fath al-Qussi fi'l-Fath al-Qudsi', in Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, p. 152.

¹³² See C. Kostick, 'Women and the First Crusade: Prostitutes or Pilgrims?', in C. Meek (ed.), and C. Lawless (ed.), *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, Dublin, Four Courts Press Ltd., 2005, pp. 64-67.

or harlot of English stock'.¹³³ Boniface's concern that English women practiced extra-marital sex during their pilgrimages was no doubt the product of a celibate cleric's overactive imagination. Yet, his statements reflect a plausible facet of medieval life, that pilgrimage was a means of spiritual, geographic, as well as sexual tourism. Ian Littlewood remarked that for pilgrims of the nineteenth century, 'self-discovery and sexual discovery are twin sides of the same coin'.¹³⁴ It is possible that crusading held similar possibilities for a relaxation of social constructs.

Numerous contemporary Muslim chroniclers mention that the crusader states had a culture of sexual freedom. One of Usama ibn Munqidh's (d.1188) most famous anecdotes from his memoirs relates how a Frankish wine merchant came home to find another man in bed with his wife. The wine merchant supposedly said to his wife's lover: 'if you do this again we'll have an argument, you and I!'¹³⁵ Usama incredulously remarked: 'And that was all the disapproval he would muster and the extent of his propriety!'¹³⁶ Similarly, the author of the *Bahr al-Favā'id*, writing sometime between 1157 and 1162, stated that the Franks condoned women freely engaging in extra-marital sex and that they explained their reasoning: 'a woman knows best about her own affairs; her private parts are hers; if she wishes she can guard them, and if she wishes she can bestow them'.¹³⁷ The *Bahr al-Favā'id* also states that, '[Frankish] women go to the priests in the church at night to keep company and fornicate with them; they consider this piety'.¹³⁸ No medieval Christian would have considered the latter anecdote to be a pious act, but it is hardly inconceivable that a number of priests, bound

¹³³ Boniface of Wessex, 'Boniface to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury; report of Frankish synods; complaints of obstacles to his mission', in trans. E. Emerton, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, A.P. Evans (ed.), New York, Columbia University Press, 1940, p. 140.

¹³⁴ I. Littlewood *Sultry Climates: Travel and Sex*, Boston, Da Capo Press, 2002, p. 100.

¹³⁵ Usama Ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*, trans. P.M. Cobb, London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2008, p. 148.

¹³⁶ Usama Ibn Munqidh, p. 148.

¹³⁷ *The Sea of Precious Virtues (Bahr al-Favā'id): A Medieval Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans. J.S. Meisami (ed.), Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1991, p. 232.

¹³⁸ *The Sea of Precious Virtues*, p. 232.

by vows of chastity, might flout these vows secretly. Both these authors regale their readership with several stories of the sexual freedom amongst Levantine Franks, as do numerous other Muslim writers.¹³⁹ Carole Hillenbrand described this kind of writing as very meditated, deliberately insulting of Frankish culture and, 'a cliché of Muslim ethnographic literature'.¹⁴⁰

It is possible, however, that these jokes were a hyperbolic version of the actual Frankish Levantine culture. To use a modern term, these Muslim authors may have been "slut-shaming"¹⁴¹ women whose sexual freedom was tolerated to a greater extent in crusader society than it was in Islamic society. This is not to say that greater sexual freedom would have been the only prohibited aspect of medieval Christian culture that women would have tried/succeeded in breaking away from. However, to Muslim commentators, this may have been the most tangible characteristic of the female Latin settlers, and one that they consistently embellished as a means of deprecating the crusaders. Muslims had plenty of opportunity to observe first hand the culture amongst the Frankish settlers, as is evident by Ibn Jubayr's comments. While traveling through the Levant in 1184 he remarked that he found it 'astonishing' that Muslims and Christians often fought battles between one another yet, 'Muslim and Christian travellers will come and go between them without interference'.¹⁴² Some Christian authors allude to this culture of sexual freedom, though far less explicitly.

¹³⁹ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani describes 300 Frankish women being brought with the Third crusade to satisfy the crusaders sexual appetites. He states that these women believed: 'they would not receive a better Eucharist than this', see: Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Muslims and Crusaders*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁰ C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p. 274.

¹⁴¹ This is a term used to describe the act of pillorying an individual (most often a woman) whose sexual activities are considered to be overly promiscuous.

¹⁴² Muhammad ibn Ahmad (Ibn Jubayr), *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: Being the Chronicles of a Medieval Spanish Moor Concerning His Journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the Holy Cities of Arabia, Baghdad the city of the Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, trans. R.J.C. Broadhurst, London, Jonathan Cape, 1952, p. 300.

Writing between 1167-1186 William of Tyre described the situation of the army of the First Crusade following the battle of Dorylaeum (July 1097):

[A]s a result of thirst and heat, pregnant women brought forth their offspring prematurely... Mothers, in agony of spirit, cast forth their babes into the camp, some living, some dead, and others in a dying condition. Other women, moved by feelings of deeper humanity, clasped their babes to their breasts, and regardless of their sex, rolled themselves along the road half nude, concerned rather with the imminent danger of death than with maintaining the respect due to their womanhood.¹⁴³

Sarah Lambert has commented on this passage saying that William did not criticise these pregnancies, 'despite the crusaders' supposed status as penitents... therefore supposedly chaste'.¹⁴⁴ Lambert goes on to say: 'William seemed not to share the horror of active sexuality during pilgrimage which [James] Brundage has described as characteristic of the First Crusade chroniclers'.¹⁴⁵ It is possible that William's relaxed view of pregnancies occurring during crusades was because he lived in the Levant at a time of greater female sexual emancipation than was common during the first half of the twelfth-century. He did believe there had been a decline of morals in the East since the First Crusaders arrival: 'now in their place a wicked generation has grown up, sinful sons... especially those dwelling in the East. One who would undertake with careful pen to portray their morals, or rather their monstrous vices, would succumb under the vast amount of material'.¹⁴⁶ A clergyman like William would have likely considered any sexual freedom immoral, so it is possible that this was the wickedness to which he was referring. During the so-called

¹⁴³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Volume One*, trans. E.A. Babcock and trans. A.C. Krey, New York, Octagon Books, 1976, p. 174.

¹⁴⁴ S. Lambert, 'Crusading or Spinning', in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Lambert, p. 11.

¹⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Volume Two*, trans. E.A. Babcock and trans. A.C. Krey, New York, Octagon Books, 1976, p. 406, William may in these comments have been attempting to extol the morality and piety of the participants of the First Crusade.

Shepherd's Crusade, in the wake of the defeat of Louis IX in Egypt, women reportedly used the movement to break the social constraints of marriage. The *Chronique de Primat*, a contemporary account but preserved only in a fourteenth-century translation, states that these crusaders 'joined nine men to one woman as if in matrimony so that no one knew to whom she belonged'.¹⁴⁷ It is highly likely this was just slander by the writer, who was a Benedictine monk,¹⁴⁸ intended to denounce the Shepherd's Crusade as heretical. Yet, these events are corroborated by other sources¹⁴⁹ and may show some licence by medieval women to, as the source above states, emancipate themselves from any perception of male ownership. Although, another reading of these events could be that these polygamous marriages were another kind of male ownership of women. What this latter example illustrates is that female sexual freedom was not tolerated in European society within the same period that Muslim writers claim a great deal of sexual liberty within the Latin East. This is indicative of a divergence between women who settled in the East and those who remained in Europe.

It is clear that women frequently took the cross, and often did so of their own accord without any male chaperon. This shows a high degree of licence among medieval women to go on crusade; yet their exact motivations remain obscure. There is some indication that, with regard to sexual freedoms, a different culture existed within the Latin East compared to Europe. It can be ventured that some women went on crusade, intending to live within this freer society. The appearance of this culture may have been a symptom of a society that allowed women greater freedom in many other aspects of society after they served Christianity through crusade. What these other potential

¹⁴⁷ Primat, 'Chronique de Primat', in trans. P. Jackson (ed.), *The Seventh Crusade, 1244-1254: Sources and Documents*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 182.

¹⁴⁸ G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle: Volume 2, J-Z*, Leiden, Brill, 2010, p. 1235.

¹⁴⁹ Also see: 'Actus pontificum Cenomannis in urbe degentum [1255-1272]' in Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade*, p. 188.

freedoms involved can only be speculated. There are a heightened number of references to this freer culture in the decades around Saladin's capture of Jerusalem, which may indicate that in the desperation to recapture Jerusalem, social constructs became especially relaxed. Yet, it is clear from the commentators on the Shepherd's Crusade that such deviations from the androcentric norm would never be tolerated unless the women-crusaders had served in a papal-sanctioned crusade. To appreciate fully the social context of these events, the reactions of Christian commentators to female participation in crusade conflict has to be analysed further.

Christian Reactions & Gender Perceptions

There is a plethora of Christian sources that describe female participation in crusade warfare. Yet, there is still some contention among historians over whether women actually engaged in combat during the crusades. One school of thought sees this high number of references to warrior-women as indicative of fact.¹⁵⁰ The opposing school, whose reservations will be explained later, treats many of the sources affirming the presence of female combatants with extreme scepticism.¹⁵¹ This section will explore contemporary writers' gender perceptions, and how these perceptions influenced their understanding of female participation in crusades. This will determine whether gender perceptions changed during the period concerned, particularly around the rise in the number of references to women fighting, during the late twelfth-century. The circumstances of female involvement and the reaction they elicited will also be a subject of scrutiny. However, one of

¹⁵⁰ See: Caspi-Reisfeld, *Gendering the Crusades*, pp. 94-107; Finucane, *Soldiers of the Faith*, p. 177.

¹⁵¹ See: Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, p. 84; see also: M. Purcell who, though she does not deny women's role in combat outright, places far greater emphasis on women's roles as unarmed-pilgrims, and reiterates that women were not termed, '*crucesignata*' until the thirteenth-century, see: Purcell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, pp. 57-59.

the more enduring and polemic reactions by contemporaries, regardless of the nature of female involvement, was a general distaste for female participation in warfare.

Writers who subscribed to this belief frequently attributed many of the hardships faced by crusaders to the women amongst them. These supposed encumbrances often included: slowing of the army's progress, the depletion of resources, and causing God's disapproval of their efforts. The latter was a very prevalent fear among contemporaries.¹⁵² Odo de Deuil, a participant in the Second Crusade (1147-1149), referred to the non-combatants of the expedition, which would have included women, as 'the weak'. Odo lamented that the pope had not forbade them from coming on the crusade: 'for the weak and helpless are always a burden to their comrades and a source of prey to their enemies'.¹⁵³ Later in his narrative, Odo described how the army, now beset by poverty and hunger, demanded means to re-arm and move more quickly to Antioch. Odo states that Louis VII responded: 'let us entrust the fleet to the defenceless mob, which has always harmed us and on whose account food is more expensive and progress slower'.¹⁵⁴ This supposed statement by Louis VII, recommended that the army and non-combatants, i.e. the women, should separate in order to increase the morale and effectiveness of the troops. Similarly, the writer of the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* states that as the army of the Third Crusade (1189-92), polluted by 'foolish pleasure-seeking', left Acre, it was decided that: 'no woman should leave the city with the army... the only exception was laundresses on foot... who would not be a burden on the army

¹⁵² The following study explores these perceptions during the First Crusade: J. Brundage, 'Prostitution, Miscegenation, and Sexual Purity in the First Crusade', in P.W. Edbury (ed.), *Crusade and Settlement: Papers Read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and presented to R.C. Smail*, Cardiff, University College Cardiff Press, 1985, pp. 380-395.

¹⁵³ Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem: The Journey of Louis the Seventh to the East*, trans. V.G. Berry, New York, Norton, 1965, bk. V, p. 95.

¹⁵⁴ Odo of Deuil, bk. VII, p. 131.

nor a cause of sin'.¹⁵⁵ In Jean de Joinville's account of the Seventh Crusade (1248-54), he describes frequent occasions where the crusaders wished to distance themselves from the sin incurred from consorting with prostitutes. He stated that after the capture of Damietta many of the 'rank and file consorted with women of loose morals', and were later dismissed by Louis IX.¹⁵⁶ This idea of women being a distraction appears in poetry and song from the period. The crusading *chanson de geste* of Aiol describes how when a woman tries to sleep with the protagonist he refuses because it would distract him from his mission: 'a woman's love changes everything, and turns a man's thoughts all astray'.¹⁵⁷

These concepts appear to stem from an inherent perception of the female gender as being weaker than the male and in many regards, superfluous. The writer of the Lyon *Eracles* was disparaging of Reynald Barlais for similar reasons. The author states that during the Fifth Crusade (1213-1221), prior to Al-Adil's siege of Reynald's holdings in Jaffa, Reynald had not procured: 'men-at-arms or other things necessary for defence. But he had taken greater trouble over bringing his wife with him'.¹⁵⁸ The problem for the chronicler was not that a woman had been brought within the city's fortifications, but that Reynald had been distracted from his duty. It is difficult to determine whether Reynald intended that his wife would provide some function in leadership of the defence at all, or whether he simply thought she would be safer inside the city walls. Regardless

¹⁵⁵ *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, trans. H.J. Nicholson, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1997, bk. IV, p. 235; Hodgson points out that this was in accordance with Henry II's 1188 ordinances which stated that women could join the army if they were of practical use, i.e. not prostitutes, see: Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 45.

¹⁵⁶ Jean de Joinville, 'The Life of Saint Louis', in Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 187, v. 171, Jean also describes a knight being sent home after being caught with a prostitute, see: p. 270, v. 505.

¹⁵⁷ *Aiol*, p. 56, vv. 2221-2222,

¹⁵⁸ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 142.

of Reynald's reasoning, it is clear that to the author of the Lyon *Eracles* women were not synonymous with usefulness in warfare.¹⁵⁹

These gender perceptions are also evident within more positive reactions to female participation in crusade warfare. A good example of this can be seen in the account of the Cistercian monk Thomas of Froidmont. He documented the travels of his sister, Margaret of Beverley, and stated that she arrived in Jerusalem in 1187 just prior to Saladin's attack on the city. In the ensuing siege, she apparently used a cooking pot as a helmet for protection while taking part in the city's defence.¹⁶⁰ Thomas remarked that his sister acted like a man, as a 'piece of tufa pretends to be a sapphire'.¹⁶¹ His comments show in no uncertain terms that he viewed the male gender as more valuable than the female. Though condescending, Thomas' statements are not disparaging of Margaret personally. Rather, his comments show that he admired his sister's efforts to rise above what he thought a person of her sex was capable of.¹⁶² He states earlier in his narrative that he recorded the story to praise God and for love of his sister.¹⁶³ Another writer with similar perspectives, and a contemporary of Thomas, was the author of the *Itinerarium*. While describing the siege of Acre in 1191, the author stated that one woman worked on building a rampart from

¹⁵⁹ While recounting Saladin's siege of Kerak in 1183, William of Tyre states: 'Great crowds of helpless people of every description and of both sexes filled the castle within, a burden rather than a help to the besieged', see: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 500

¹⁶⁰ Thomas of Froidmont, 'Hodoeporicon et Pericula Margarite Iherosolimitane', in P.G. Schmidt, 'Peregrinatio Periculosa: Thomas Von Froidmont über die Jerusalemfahrten seiner Schwester Margareta', in U.J. Stache (ed.), W. Maaz (ed.) and F. Wagner (ed.), *Kontinuität und Wandel: Lateinische Poesie von Naevius bis Baudelaire. Franco Munari zum 65. Geburtstag*, Hildesheim, Weidmannsche 1986, p. 478, vv. 45-50: *Assimilata viro galeam gero, menia giro / In cervice lebes cassidis instar habet... Estus erat, nec erat requies pugnantibus; ergo / In muro fessis pocula trado viris*; Cf. Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 67.

¹⁶¹ Thomas of Froidmont, p. 478, v. 47: *Femina fingo virum, tophus pretendo saphirum*: Cf. Maier, *Journal of Medieval History*, p. 67.

¹⁶² Helen Solterer explores similar themes in thirteenth-century French literature, see: H. Solterer, 'Figures of Female Militancy in Medieval France', *Signs*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1991, pp. 522-549.

¹⁶³ Thomas of Froidmont, *Kontinuität und Wandel*, p. 476: *...quem metrica composuit ad laudem Dei et ob amorem dicte sororis sue*.

which the city could be assaulted, and the crusaders' camp defended.¹⁶⁴ The woman was mortally wounded by an arrow and demanded that upon dying, her body should be heaped on the defences, adding to the rampart.¹⁶⁵ The writer remarked: 'O admirable faith of the weaker sex! O Zeal of woman worthy of imitation!'¹⁶⁶ This writer emphasises the "weakness" of the female gender, but is impressed by her efforts despite this. He used a similar phrasing in describing a group of women who killed a number of Muslims captured in a sea battle: 'The women's physical weakness prolonged the pain of death, because they cut [the Muslims'] heads off with knives instead of swords'.¹⁶⁷ Though the author may have been impressed at the women's devotion to this gory task, his fundamental belief was that the female gender was inefficient at tasks associated with men.¹⁶⁸

Other commentators did not always see female participation in combat as positive or negative, but as a necessity. The letter quoted in the introduction to this thesis, composed by Raymond of the knights Hospitaller in 1178, is a great example of this. He stated that prior to the Christian troops leaving Jerusalem to face Saladin at the battle of Montgisard (1177): 'we put the defence of the Tower of David and the whole city in the hands of our women, with many tears and indescribable wailing'.¹⁶⁹ The crusaders won this battle, so the women defending the city walls never had to fight off any attackers. However, his statement shows the great responsibility the people of Jerusalem placed on their female members. Raymond's statement could be interpreted as

¹⁶⁴ *The Chronicle of the third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 106.

¹⁶⁵ *The Chronicle of the third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 106.

¹⁶⁶ *The Chronicle of the third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 106.

¹⁶⁷ *The Chronicle of the third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 89.

¹⁶⁸ Caspi-Reisfeld has stated with regards to the latter anecdote that, 'the writer intended to emphasise the superiority of Christian male warriors over the Muslims, but it also attests unwittingly to the women's ability to use medieval weapons', see: Caspi-Reisfeld, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 99; her point about the writer trying to emphasise Christian martial superiority is apt, and cause for scepticism over whether the event actually transpired. However, her belief that the author accidentally described women trained in the use of medieval weapons is implausible. The writer of the *Itinerarium's* point was that the women were inexperienced at killing; therefore it took a long time, and was all the more embarrassing for the Muslims.

¹⁶⁹ Raymond, *Letters from the East*, p.72.

an exaggeration of the desperation of the crusaders, so as to make it appear that every man capable of fighting had left. Such an exaggeration by Raymond would help in embellishing the insurmountable odds that the crusaders faced, and all the more honour that should be bestowed upon them, given they were victorious. However, Michael Haag has said that though contemporary estimates of Saladin's army numbering thirty thousand men are untrustworthy, the crusaders were undoubtedly heavily outnumbered.¹⁷⁰ Raymond's statement, that the citadel of Jerusalem was to be defended by women if Saladin defeated the crusader army and subsequently besieged the city, is at least plausible.

Despite the gender bias of these writers, they did recognise that women's contributions merited financial compensation. Caspi-Reisfeld noted that: 'women, portrayed by the chroniclers as physically weak and taking a minor role in the crusader camp's battle nonetheless received material recognition in the share of the loot'.¹⁷¹ This can be seen in the *Itinerarium* when it states that during the crusaders' siege of Acre in 1190 there was a small sea battle between the city's Muslim defenders and a Christian fleet. It states: 'the victors dragged [a Muslim] galley back with them up on to dry land and left it on the shore to be plundered by our people of both sexes'.¹⁷² This event is significant given that the crew who captured the ship did not take the spoils but rather, recognised the needs of the men and women maintaining the siege from the land. Similarly, Thomas of Froidmont notes that Margaret of Beverley gained wealth through her involvement in a clash between Christian and Muslim troops outside Antioch. She appears to have been allowed to plunder the Muslim casualties, and he remarks in the first person: '...already replenished, I who

¹⁷⁰ M. Haag, *Templars: History and Myth: From Solomon's Temple to the Freemasons*, London, Profile Books Ltd., 2008, p. 166.

¹⁷¹ Caspi-Reisfeld, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 98.

¹⁷² *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 89.

recently was a beggar am now rich, though I do not expect to be prosperous for long'.¹⁷³ There are less explicit examples of loot being divided equally among participants in crusades. Geoffrey de Villehardouin's account of the Fourth Crusade consistently refers to the crusaders exclusively as men. However, he states that prior to the first siege of Constantinople, it was decided that if they captured the city one quarter of all booty would go to whoever they elected emperor, the remainder would be divided: 'half going to the Venetians and half to the host'.¹⁷⁴ This use of the word 'host' in reference to the crusader army, rather than men or troops, possibly indicates that the non-combatants, including women, also received a portion of the loot. Though, in this case women could only have made up a very small proportion of the army, given the highly militarised nature of the Fourth Crusade, and it may well have just been a term Villehardouin used for 'army'.¹⁷⁵

It is patent that women actively participated in crusade warfare throughout the period despite the eclectic reactions from male participants to them. There are however, notably more references to women participating in crusade warfare in the years leading up the capture of Jerusalem in 1187 and in the immediate decades that followed where Christendom scrambled to retake the city. It is plausible that within these decades female participation experienced a spike because Christian society was in such shock at the loss of the holy city, that they allowed traditional gender roles to relax. This interpretation is supported by the more positive reactions to female participation in combat in sources written during this period. Yet, Just as Kedar noted, there was a decline in the 'popular element' of crusading during the thirteenth-century that meant there were

¹⁷³ Thomas of Froidmont, *Kontinuität und Wandel*, p. 482, vv. 155-156: 'Iam rebus plena, dives sum, nuper egen; sed mihi prosperitas non solet esse diu'. (My translation.)

¹⁷⁴ Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople II*, trans. E. Faral (ed.), Paris, Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1939, p. 36: 'la moitié as Venisiens et la moitié a cels de l'ost'. (my translation.)

¹⁷⁵ Caroline Smith translates this word as 'people', which may be misleading, but it does highlight the possibility that Villehardouin was trying to explain that every member of the crusading expedition would get a share, see: Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 62.

far fewer references to warrior-women in sources from that period. Sources that do mention women's participation by the time of the seventh crusade for instance, do so only in passing. Jean de Joinville's account from this time is utterly aghast at the Tartar practice of paying 'women to fight just as they do the men'.¹⁷⁶ This is perhaps indicative that a reassertion of traditional gender roles occurred during the thirteenth-century. Islamic and Byzantine sources similarly reflect a spike of female involvement in combat during the later twelfth-century. Their written reactions to this have been the subject of much scholarly debate. However, much of this discourse has focused on Byzantine and Muslim writings' predilections to insult the male members of the crusading armies, rather than the implications these writings have for female warrior culture.

Muslim & Byzantine Reactions: Crusading Interpretations

This section will examine how the two other major cultures exposed to the crusades, the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, reacted to warrior-women. Participation in warfare for both these cultures was strictly reserved for the male gender. As such, martial women were as uncommon amongst both as they were in contemporary western European culture. As Ibn Wāṣil noted on the regency of Shajar al-Durr (d.1257), the first female monarch of Egypt: 'it was impossible to defend the country when the ruler was a woman'.¹⁷⁷ To this writer and to his contemporaries, the female gender and warfare belonged in entirely separate spheres. The rise in the appearance of warrior-women in the crusades would have had an impact on Byzantine and Muslim people and would have affected their interpretation of the nature of the crusades. However, there is an imbalance in the modern discourse over the subject, with far greater scrutiny being paid to Muslim reactions to

¹⁷⁶ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 266, v. 488.

¹⁷⁷ ibn Wāṣil, 'Mufarrij al-Kurūb', in Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade*, p. 216.

warrior-woman than Byzantine interpretations. However, the reasoning behind many Muslim authors' distaste for Christian female warriors and by extension the crusades themselves has not been sufficiently explored by modern historians; Byzantine opinions of Latin women participating in crusade warfare have barely been touched on by modern scholarship.

One of the few works covering the twelfth to thirteenth centuries that have received some attention is Niketas Choniates's work *O City of Byzantium*. His work chronicles the lives of the Byzantine emperors from the beginning of John Komnenos' independent rule in 1118 up until the capture of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204.¹⁷⁸ Considered by many to be a continuation of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, Niketas's work is similarly distrustful and deprecating of the crusaders. His account of the Second and Fourth Crusade are both punctuated by very poignant images of Latin women leading the destruction wrought by these armies. He described the oncoming crusaders in 1147 as: 'a dreadful death-dealing pestilence'.¹⁷⁹ Niketas remarked on this army: 'females were numbered among them, riding horseback in the manner of men... bearing lances and weapons as men do; dressed in masculine garb, they conveyed a wholly martial appearance, more mannish than the Amazons. One stood out from the rest as another Penthesilea'.¹⁸⁰ The person he described as 'Penthesilea', the Amazon queen of Homeric myth, is presumed by many historians to be Eleanor of Aquitaine.¹⁸¹ Niketas's depiction of these Latin women as Amazons would have been intentionally insulting. The Amazons were considered the embodiment of barbarity due to their break from

¹⁷⁸ Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, p. 1148.

¹⁷⁹ Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H.J. Magoulias, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1984, p. 35.

¹⁸⁰ Niketas Choniates, p. 35.

¹⁸¹ Evans is unconvinced that Niketas' reference to Penthesilea was to Eleanor. He backs up this assertion in part, by stating that western sources like Odo de Deuil and William of Tyre do not mention Eleanor ever wearing armour. However, these contemporaries would have avoided describing such a martial visage of Eleanor as it may have appeared unsavory to their medieval Christian audience and as a consequence, it would have made the crusaders appear barbaric. See: M.R. Evans, *Inventing Eleanor: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Image of Eleanor of Aquitaine*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 40-43.

traditional female gender roles.¹⁸² A classical scholar like Niketas would have been very aware of this connection and most likely intended to convey the same point. The Second Crusade occurred before Niketas was born, though it is possible that he heard this story from an eyewitness and embellished it.

Byzantine contemporaries do not corroborate Niketas's account. One Byzantine eyewitness to the Second Crusade was the anonymous court poet who modern historians have designated with the invented name: Manganeios Prodromos. Though he was equally vitriolic towards the crusaders, he does not mention any armoured women. However, Manganeios' account focused almost exclusively on the German contingent of the crusade.¹⁸³ Similarly, John Kinnamos, another twelfth-century Byzantine chronicler, does not mention the armed women though his narrative again focused more intently on the German contingent.¹⁸⁴ However, Kinnamos was not a valid eyewitness, being at most four years old during the events. Whether Niketas' statement is true or not, he was writing later than any other comparable Byzantine source describing the events. So it is possible that the women he described were enduring aspects within Byzantine cultural memory of this crusading army. The use of martial women as a device to slander the crusaders as barbaric is also a common trope in Muslim accounts.

There are remarkably more instances of Muslim writers describing woman actually fighting for crusader forces than there are within Christian sources. It is likely this imbalance is partly due to

¹⁸² P.J. Geary, *Women at the Beginning: Origin Myths from the Amazons to the Virgin Mary*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 29-30.

¹⁸³ See E. Jeffreys and M. Jeffreys, 'The "Wild Beast from the West": Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade', in A.E. Laiou (ed.) and R.P. Mottahedeh (ed.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001, pp. 101-116.

¹⁸⁴ John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. C.M. Brand, New York, Columbia University Press, 1976.

medieval Christian writers avoiding reporting women fighting for crusader armies. This could be due to a belief that a medieval Christian audience would perceive warrior-women as counter culture. Christian chroniclers would have thought that by extension, the audience would have thought less of the crusade movement. Similarly, historians have frequently interpreted the care medieval Muslim chroniclers took to include, exaggerate, or invent stories of Christian women-warriors as having been a device to slander the crusaders' masculinity.¹⁸⁵ Niall Christie and Maureen Purcell are great exponents of this interpretation. Christie explains that: 'suggesting that one's enemies were unable to restrict their women to their appropriate gender roles was a way of questioning their masculinity and hence denigrating them'.¹⁸⁶ It is highly likely that this was the main factor in the frequency of Muslim accounts of warrior-women. However, reducing all accounts of militant crusading women within Muslim narratives to literary devices for deprecating men is itself an act that re-inscribes patriarchal discourse. This thinking also rules out the possibility that women took conscious steps to break out of their gender roles.

One hole in Christie's argument is that several Muslim narratives of Christian women fighting in the crusades describe the women beating their Muslim adversaries. Beha ed-Din described an assault made by Muslim forces in 1190 on the crusader ramparts outside Acre. Within this account he relates a story told to him by: 'one very intelligent old man, belonging to the mercenaries'.¹⁸⁷ He probably described his source like this to add credibility. The old man saw a woman on the crusaders' rampart: 'shooting arrows from a wooden bow, with which she wounded

¹⁸⁵ See: Evans, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 45.

¹⁸⁶ Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders*, p. 84: Christie went on to say that, 'Muslim attitudes towards women actually fighting in the Frankish forces... seem to have been almost uniformly negative, something that resulted from an over-arching assumption that women should be restricted to the domestic sphere', see: Christie, pp. 83-84.

¹⁸⁷ Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin or What Befell Sultun Yusuf*, trans. C.W. Wilson, London, Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1897, p. 261.

several of our men. She was at last overpowered by numbers; we killed her...'.¹⁸⁸ If Beha invented this report, it would be odd for him to describe a Latin woman who was so harmful to Islamic warriors, and was only defeated by numbers rather than martial skill. The story does little to emphasise the effeminacy of the Christian men, though it is possible that Beha was intending to insult the mercenaries within Saladin's army. In any case, there is no overt reason to assume he was not telling the truth, if an exaggerated version. Ibn al-Athir similarly reported that in 1188, at the siege of Bourzey, he saw a Frankish woman helping operate a trebuchet within the fortress. Her actions helped destroy one of the Muslims' trebuchets, forcing them to re-think their assault.¹⁸⁹ Much like the example by Beha, it is unlikely that this latter report was intended to deprecate the crusaders' masculinity as the male Muslim troops are reported as being beaten. It is also unlikely that the writer would intentionally invent a story that called Islamic warriors' martial skill and consequently, their masculinity, into question. Such an act was especially doubtful since Ibn al-Athir used the example of a Tartar woman defeating a number of Georgians in 1221 specifically to highlight the 'submissive' and cowardly nature of the Georgian people.¹⁹⁰

Despite the frequency of Islamic sources regaling their readership with stories of women warriors, medieval Muslim writers were remarkably silent on one of the few cases where Western sources corroborate a woman's actions in directing troops in combat. The Lyon *Eracles* explains that Raymond of Tripoli was not within his city, Tiberias, when Saladin besieged it in 1187. As a result, Raymond's wife Eschiva had to command the defenders of the town in his stead. Though much of the city was taken by Saladin's troops, Eschiva and her entourage held out in the citadel until she

¹⁸⁸ Beha Ed-Din , p. 261.

¹⁸⁹ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, pp. 349-350.

¹⁹⁰ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 3: The Years 589-629/1193-1231: The Ayyubids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace*, trans. D.S. Richards, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010, pp. 216-217.

surrendered.¹⁹¹ However, a letter by Saladin to ‘the glorious *Dīwān*’ (the court of the Caliph) recounting the capture of Tiberias makes no mention of Eschiva’s resistance, subsequent correspondence,¹⁹² and capitulation.¹⁹³ Saladin states that he wrote the letter after he had captured Acre.¹⁹⁴ This firmly places the composition of the letter after the surrender of Tiberias’ citadel. However, Saladin only refers to the capture of the city of Tiberias, tersely stating: ‘the servant [i.e. Saladin] attacked Tiberias in the morning, deflowering it with the sword’.¹⁹⁵ It is possible that Saladin felt that the involvement of Eschiva was of little importance in comparison to the other events he narrated such as the capture of Acre or the Battle of Hattin. However, there is no mention in any source of Eschiva’s direct participation in combat, and this may have been the more noteworthy activity to Muslim authors. Despite this, the events that Saladin was describing took place before the fall of Jerusalem. It is after the capture of Jerusalem that there appears to be a spike in Muslim accounts of Frankish warrior-women. It appears this is the key moment that spurred the rise of crusading women actively participating in battle. This would account for the marked lack of descriptions of such women in works that concern the time period before 1187, such as Usama ibn Munquidh’s.¹⁹⁶ In any case, the episode of Eschiva’s participation in the siege of

¹⁹¹ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 48.

¹⁹² Saladin must have been aware that Eschiva commanded the garrison as she negotiated with him directly, though this will be analysed in chapter 4, see: Anonymous, p. 48, v. 44; see also the following (the only Islamic source that mentions Eschiva’s participation): Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi’l-Ta’rikh. Part 2*, p. 324.

¹⁹³ Saladin, ‘Saladin’s Hattin Letter’, trans. C.P. Melville and trans. M.C.Lyons, in Kedar, *The Horn of Hattin*, pp. 208-212.

¹⁹⁴ Saladin, p. 210.

¹⁹⁵ Saladin, p. 210.

¹⁹⁶ One of the few stories of this nature that Usama ibn Munqidh relates was one told to him by an emir named Nada al-Sulayhi. Nada said that he got his facial scar from a time he was raiding a caravan and a Christian woman attacked him. Both Usama and Nada appear to have been impressed by the woman’s efforts, see: Usama Ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation*, p. 141; Niall Christie conceded that, ‘the women [Usama] describes in his work are not merely the passive figures of deprecatory stories about the Franks’, see: N. Christie, ‘Just a Bunch of Dirty Stories? Women in the “Memoirs” of Usamah Ibn Munqidh’, in R. Allen (ed.), *Eastward Bound: Travel and Travellers, 1050-1550*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 84.

Tiberias highlights that not all Islamic writers leapt at the chance to use women-crusaders to deprecate crusading men.

Rather than there simply being a discourse over masculinity within Muslim accounts, these writers may have seen the number of Latin women involved in combat as a sign of the fanaticism of the crusade movement. Ibn al-Athir, a contemporary of the period, attributed the number of women seen participating in combat post-1187 to the shock spread across Christendom due to the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin: 'they answered the call in great numbers, even the women, for there were with them at Acre a number of women, competing with their fellows'.¹⁹⁷ Regardless of whether he contrived these events, he was using the example of warrior-women to illustrate the extreme religious fanaticism of the crusaders. By extension, Ibn al-Athir was characterising the crusading period immediately following 1187 by the significant number of female participants. Constance Rousseau adds some weight to this assertion when stating that: 'with the loss of Jerusalem... popes such as Gregory VIII (1187), Clement III (1187-91), and especially Innocent III (1198-1216), focusing on ultimate Christian victory, gradually broadened their understanding of the crusade to include a spectrum of activities which permitted more female involvement'.¹⁹⁸ Similarly to Ibn al-Athir, Imad al-Din al-Isfahani stated that among the participants of the Third Crusade, there were: 'women knights... who distinguished themselves in the thick of battle and did acts of intelligent men while being gentlewomen. They considered these all to be acts of worship, and they believed that they would gain happiness through them and made them their customary practice'.¹⁹⁹ Imad al-Din's statement also uses the example of women breaking into male gender roles to

¹⁹⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, p. 364.

¹⁹⁸ C.M. Rousseau, 'Home Front and Battlefield: The Gendering of Papal Crusading Policy (1095-1221)', in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁹⁹ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Muslims and Crusaders*, p.153.

illustrate Christian extremism. Beha ed-Din also notes occasions in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem where Christian women had sought out battle and taken to wearing male clothing, fully adopting the male gender role.²⁰⁰ It is conceivable that numerous other Muslim writers who describe warrior-women were also trying to convey a sense of Christian fanaticism. Byzantine sources from a comparable period also highlight the fanatical element of the crusades by describing women breaking gender boundaries.

In Niketas Choniatēs' description of the capture of Constantinople in 1204 by members of the Fourth Crusade, he lingers over a description of one Latin woman taking part in the sacking of the city. He states that: 'a certain silly woman laden with sins, an attendant of Erinyes, the handmaid of demons, the workshop of unspeakable spells and reprehensible charms, waxing wanton against Christ, sat upon the synthronon and intoned a song, and then whirled about and kicked up her heels in dance'.²⁰¹ Niketas may, in common with some Muslim writers, have been trying to illustrate the fanaticism of the crusades. Niketas may have been using an example of a woman breaking from the expectations of her gender to highlight how the crusaders had broken with Christian norms. He was present at the sacking of Constantinople so it is feasible that he witnessed this event but again, he could well have invented or exaggerated it to emphasise his

²⁰⁰ Beha ed-Din described the aftermath of an engagement between the crusaders and Muslim forces in 1190: 'I noticed the bodies of two women. Someone told me that he had seen four women engaged in the fight, two of whom were taken prisoners', see: Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin or What Befell Sultun Yusuf*, p. 195; Ibn al-Athir similarly stated that in 1189, at a battle outside Acre, Saladin's forces captured three crusaders who: 'had been fighting on horseback... their armour thrown off, it was discovered that they were women', see: Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, p. 368.

²⁰¹ Niketas Choniatēs, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 315, A synthronon is a throne reserved for bishops situated behind the holy altar, see: Magoulas, 'Notes to Pages 312-318', in *O City of Byzantium*, p. 406, n. 1523.

point. Prior to the capture of Jerusalem in 1187, however, Muslim and Byzantine authors make far fewer links between female participation in the crusades and religious fanaticism.²⁰²

In common with Christian sources on women's involvement in crusades, Muslim sources highlight a spike around the decades following Jerusalem's capture by Saladin. This spike is not so pronounced within Byzantine sources, however, this may have been because the crusaders were directing far more of their aggressions against Muslims during the twelfth-century, so the Byzantines had less opportunity to witness warrior-women. There is an indication within all the sources examined here that the Christian world was experiencing extreme desperation to regain possession of Jerusalem. This is not surprising given that the city had been considered a focal point of Christendom. This rise in the number of female crusaders does not necessarily suggest that female involvement in crusades was centred on this pivotal moment in crusade history, rather it is indicative of a social shift. Women were definitely involved in crusading before and well after 1187. However, the decade after Jerusalem's capture may highlight a point at which Christian society tolerated an extensive emancipation of women from their traditional gender roles, given the perceived desperation of the situation. Such new freedom would have allowed women to become far more embroiled in crusade warfare than they had been previously, as well as possibly enjoying a more emancipated status within Frankish Levantine society. The majority of Muslim sources that corroborate this interpretation are steeped in anti-crusader rhetoric and in the words of Jane Chance, 'imbued with the patristic identification of woman with the body'.²⁰³ It is unlikely that many women enjoyed any kind of heightened social freedoms or at least to the extent that is alluded to in

²⁰² Usama Ibn Munqidh's (d.1188) memoirs make no links between religious fanaticism and female participation in crusades. Though, Usama did reflect: 'the Franks, God curse them, are an accursed race that will not become accustomed to anyone not of their own race', see: Usama Ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation*, p. 142; He supports this claim with an anecdote about a Frankish woman who preferred to live as a commoner amongst Franks, than live as an aristocrat amongst Muslims, see: Usama Ibn Munqidh, p 143.

²⁰³ J. Chance, *The Mythographic Chaucer*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 215.

Islamic sources. It is possible however, that there was a rise in social freedoms for women in the Levant, and Muslim sources utilised this as a means to further insult the crusaders. Sylvia Schein made a comparable deduction when stating categorically that, 'women in the historical kingdom of Jerusalem... enjoyed more legal rights, held a more important position and carried out more functions than their contemporaries in the West'.²⁰⁴ Nonetheless, Schein was writing about the increased likelihood of these women to inherit land, as opposed to describing a shift toward a less socially repressed culture.

Saladin's campaigns not only captured Jerusalem, but also the surrounding townships and numerous coastal cities. This displacement of the Christian community in the Levant may also have swelled the number of women taking part in the immediate combat and ensuing warfare of the Third Crusade. For those people that had been settled in the Levant for a number of generations, there would have been a very real need to regain a footing within the Near East in order to re-establish themselves. This seems likely, as there is a drop in the number of references to warrior-women from Christian, Muslim and Byzantine sources as the thirteenth-century progressed. It seems that traditional expectations of gender roles were reasserted as the immediate perceived need to regain hegemony over the Near East began to loosen within Christendom. This all gives an indication of a minor but visible bell-curve in the emancipation of women from patriarchal-imposed gender roles during the crusades, with 1187 situated at the top of the curve. These trends in the

²⁰⁴ S. Schein, 'Women in Medieval Colonial Society: The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century', in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 140.

Frankish Levantine perceptions of appropriate female gender roles are also visible within the culture of queenship in the crusader states.

Chapter Three: Contagious Queenship?

The Culture of female leadership in the Levant and its effects on visiting women leaders

The most effective means for women to rise above the social constraints of the Middle Ages was to rise in social standing. Despite the entrenched medieval belief that the male gender was superior to the female, the social advantages of being a man predominantly applied only within the social class to which one belonged. A man from one level of the social strata held no direct power over a woman from a higher one simply by virtue of him being a man. The crusades offered noblewomen a greater likelihood to take control of land and positions of leadership. This would have created a society with proportionately far more women in power than within contemporary European society and perhaps by extension, a culture that promulgated greater female freedom.²⁰⁵ This chapter will ascertain how the crusades offered women a chance to attain power and, ultimately, regency. In so doing, this chapter's argument will further the current trend of historians to highlight how the push towards primogeniture during the twelfth-century did not marginalise women, as discussed in the historiographical chapter. There were many queens of the Latin states throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many of whom became rulers in their own right. Part of this study will examine how these queens were remembered in chronicles and popular memory of crusading both in Europe and in the Levant, and whether there was any divergence in the perception of female leadership between these two geographic areas. The precise differences in these perceptions will be shown to be quite nuanced. However, through the example of illustrations

²⁰⁵ Kimberly LoPrete remarked that, 'medieval demographic trends, combined with the growing popularity of crusading after 1095, indicate that the numbers of, and opportunities for, noblewomen to wield lordly powers were greater than is generally appreciated', see: K.A. LoPrete, 'Gendering Viragos: Medieval Perceptions of Powerful Women', in C. Meeks (ed.) and C. Lawless (ed.), *Studies of Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, Portland, Four Courts Press, 2005, p. 19.

of Queen Melisende produced in manuscripts, it will be shown that by the thirteenth-century Europe and the Latin East had diverged significantly in perspective on female leadership. It will be shown that there is a connection in the Frankish Levantine perception of female leadership in the Levant with the “bell curve” of female emancipation peaking in the 1180s described in Chapter Two.

Crusading and its Opportunities for Women.

Women’s enhanced ability to gain leadership roles within Frankish Levantine society was due to their higher probability of attaining land than their contemporaries within Europe. This was made possible because female life-expectancy rose in the Latin states much earlier than in Europe, so more women were able to inherit the land of their male relatives. Having power within a society during the High Middle Ages was largely dependent on the quantity of land one had at one’s disposal and the number of people who were dependant on that land. Judith Bennet’s study of widows in the English countryside prior to the Black Death determined that an ‘average marital duration of about 20 years likely characterized English rural communities throughout the preindustrial period’.²⁰⁶ Bennett stated that it is difficult to ascertain whether proportionately more men or women were left bereaved, though ‘social custom invariably assured that more women than men remained alone’.²⁰⁷ She went on to remark that, in spite of this: ‘widows enjoyed dower rights that superseded the claims of heirs... as a result, widows controlled... 10 to 15 percent of all holdings’.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ J.M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender & Household in Brigstock Before the Plague*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 143.

²⁰⁷ Bennett, p. 144; Bennet does not go into detail on the social customs that ‘assured’ women remained alone.

²⁰⁸ Bennett, p. 144.

The quantity of holdings held by women in the Latin states would have been comparatively higher than in Europe because of the higher male death rates due to incessant warfare, disease, and climate differences. Sylvia Schein concluded, using a mixture of her own research and that of J.C. Russel,²⁰⁹ that noble female settlers in the Latin states had a life expectancy of approximately forty-four years whereas men of the same social class had a life expectancy of about thirty to thirty-five years.²¹⁰ This was radically different from the demographics in Europe during the same period. According to Russel, within western Europe, men tended to outlive women leading to a, 'sex ratio (number of men to 100 women) often [as] high as 120'.²¹¹ Contemporaries in Western Europe did not notice any shift in gender life expectancies until the second half of the thirteenth-century. Writing sometime between 1256 and 1263 the scientist and theologian Albertus Magnus stated that: 'the male has a longer life span naturally... nevertheless, the female has the longer life span *per accidens*, because she does not work as hard'.²¹² Albertus believed that under optimum conditions men would naturally live longer than women, but due to the social circumstances of the time men died earlier due to heavy labour, warfare and, exposure to disease through travel.²¹³ It appears, however, that the phenomenon of higher female life expectancy had begun much earlier in the Latin States.

²⁰⁹ J.C. Russel, 'The Population of the Crusader States', in N.P. Zacour (ed.) and K.M. Setton (ed.), *A History of The Crusades: Volume Five, The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 295-314.

²¹⁰ S. Schein, *Gendering the Crusades*, pp. 148-149; A possible allusion to this imbalance of the sexes in the Latin States can be seen in the continuation of William of Tyre where it states that within crusader held Jerusalem in 1187: 'for every man that is in this city, there are 50 women and children', however, this may have been an attempt to emphasise to the city's lack of combatants, see: Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 58, v. 53.

²¹¹ Russel, *A History of The Crusades*, p. 296.

²¹² Albertus Magnus, *The Fathers of the Church Mediaeval Continuation: Albert the Great, Questions Concerning Aristotle's On Animals*, trans. I.M. Resnick and K.F. Kitchell Jr., Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2008, pp. 449-450.

²¹³ Vern Bullough and Cameron Campbell have noted that the medieval diet gradually improved and the excess protein available could also have helped improve female life expectancy, see: V. Bullough and C. Campbell, 'Female Longevity and Diet in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, vol. 55, no. 2, 1980, pp. 317-325.

Women who outlived their husbands or fathers, but delayed or refused to remarry could wield a high degree of autonomy. Sylvia Schein has noted that in the Latin states, 'women inherited their fathers' fiefs more often than elsewhere; a relatively short male lifespan (thirty to thirty-five years) produced a large number of female heiresses'.²¹⁴ She went on to state that this gave women in the Latin states more 'freedom of action',²¹⁵ than their contemporaries in western Europe. This freedom is particularly evident in the laws surrounding marriage in the Latin East during the twelfth-century. James Brundage stated that in the early years of the formation of the Latin states, 'women in Outremer were originally allowed to marry as they pleased'.²¹⁶ This meant that if a woman's husband died and she inherited his (or part of his) holdings through her dower rights, it was not possible under the laws of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem for a socially superior individual, such as a patron or king, to force her to take a new husband. This was aided by the fact that canon law stipulated that a marriage was not valid if one party entered the marriage unwillingly.²¹⁷ If a woman did remarry, her new husband would take control of whatever property she had inherited through her previous husband's death. In these circumstances, women who avoided remarrying could attain a lot of power and freedom. Hodgson has commented that this phenomenon was generally limited to aristocratic widows, as widowhood was hardly a, 'universally liberating experience for women'.²¹⁸

However, due to the system of military service in place in Outremer Frankish settlers enacted laws in the thirteenth-century that favoured men inheriting land. Joshua Prawer noted that the Latin states retained a tradition of feudalism, 'long after the motherland changed beyond

²¹⁴ Schein, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 141.

²¹⁵ Schein, p. 140.

²¹⁶ J.A. Brundage, 'Marriage Law in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', in B.Z Kedar (ed.), H.E Mayer (ed.), and R.C. Smail (ed.), *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982, pp. 259-260.

²¹⁷ J.A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, London, Longman, 1995, p. 73.

²¹⁸ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 201.

recognition'.²¹⁹ Therefore, if a woman held a fief that owed military service to a liege lord and the troops from that fief had to be levied, there would be no male to perform the obligations of a vassal and lead those troops.²²⁰ It is possible that during the initial years of the occupation of the Levant, the Frankish settlers wanted to insure that someone from within their community inherited land and therefore allowed women to inherit more easily than they would have allowed in Europe. Given the high number of heiresses this produced in the Latin states, over time, the laws were likely slowly altered to allow for more soldiers to be levied. Exactly when or who altered the laws is hard to ascertain. This is because, aside from a minor record of an act of Nablus' parliament in 1120, there is no surviving documentation of the laws of Outremer from the twelfth-century.²²¹ Bernard Hamilton has deduced that as late as the 1160s, 'the law of Jerusalem enacted that in the case of female heirs the eldest daughter should have the same rights as an eldest son and should inherit the entire fief'.²²² Writing on the legal codes from Outremer that survive from the mid thirteenth-century, Brundage noted that, 'the military needs of the kingdom demanded that female fief-holders be married... accordingly the feudal law of Outremer was much concerned with the conditions under which noble women might be required to marry'.²²³ This is an example of the decline in women's freedoms by the thirteenth-century in Outremer. Mimi Abramovitz observed a similar phenomenon in the colonial settlement of North America. She noted that, in the mid seventeenth century, women were often allotted land in the new colonies to encourage them to emigrate: 'the inducement had to be eliminated, however, when some independent female landowners chose not to marry... [and] Georgia, settled a hundred years later, not only refused to

²¹⁹ J. Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972, p. 128.

²²⁰ See: Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, 206.

²²¹ Brundage, *Outremer*, p. 259.

²²² B. Hamilton, 'Miles of Plancy and the Fief of Beirut', in Kedar, *The Horns of Hattin*, p. 142.

²²³ Brundage, *Outremer*, p. 267.

grant women land, but denied them the right to inherit'.²²⁴ This suggests that colonial societies throughout history were prone to encountering circumstances that caused more women to inherit land than the social and cultural landscape was orientated to suit. It is possible, as will be discussed, that the legal changes in Outremer were indicative of a negative turn in Levantine-Frankish attitudes towards women. This is supported by the comparatively larger number of examples of Latin women solidifying their authority through widowhood during the twelfth, rather than in the thirteenth-century.

A good example of female emancipation through widowhood can be seen in the case of Constance of Antioch (d.1163). After the death of her first husband, Raymond of Poitiers (d.1149), Constance took over the regency of the principality of Antioch. According to William of Tyre, Baldwin III: 'repeatedly advised [Constance] to choose one of the nobles as a husband... neither the king, nor the count, her kinsmen, neither the queen nor the countess of Tripoli, her two aunts, was able to induce her to yield and thus provide for herself and her land'.²²⁵ William portrays Constance as reckless and disobedient for not remarrying, however, this is potentially because when she finally did remarry it was to Renaud de Châtillon whom William disliked.²²⁶ Regardless of William's disparaging comments, the fact of the matter was Constance legally did not have to remarry if she did not wish to. The Byzantine chronicler John Kinnamos also records these events and states that John Roger, the widowed son-in-law of John II Komnenos, came to Antioch in 1152 to propose marriage to Constance and was rebuffed: 'because he was aged, Constance regarded him with

²²⁴ M. Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present*, Cambridge, South End Press, 1988, p. 46.

²²⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVII, p. 213.

²²⁶ See: Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, 223; William of Tyre also describes Constance as having, 'stoop[ed] to marry an ordinary knight [Renaud]', see: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 224.

displeasure'.²²⁷ Again, it is possible she simply did not wish to remarry at that time because she was in position of considerable freedom.²²⁸ Another instance of a Latin woman gaining power and autonomy through widowhood can be seen in Maria of Antioch (d.1182) who became regent over the Byzantine Empire following the death of her husband Manuel I Komnenos in 1180. Niketas Choniates gives an indication of the authority Maria held when stating: 'all the revenues which had been collected with much sweat by the preceding Komnenian emperors... were channelled to the protosebastos [Alexios Komnenos (Maria's lover)] and [Maria]'.²²⁹ It is possible that Niketas was overstating the amount of funds Maria had access to in order to embellish the calamity caused through her leadership. This is likely as he was writing not long after the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople. Niketas would have harboured a particularly heightened distrust of Latins, and would likely have jumped at any opportunity to depict them as untrustworthy. Maria did not gain independence through the laws of the Kingdom of Jerusalem but her case is an example of widowhood elevating a Latin woman's social standing in the Levant.

There are instances of widows in western Europe from this same period also attaining a great deal of autonomy. For instance, Adela of Blois (d.1137), according to Amy Livingstone, 'remained in control of [her] counties for well over a decade' after the death of her husband.²³⁰ Ela countess of Salisbury (d.1261), held a similar authority over her county as is evident by one charter she wrote sometime between 1226-36: 'I Ela... in my widowhood and liege power have given... to

²²⁷ John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, p. 97.

²²⁸ See also the case of Hodierna of Jerusalem. She was made regent of Edessa after the assassination of her husband Raymond II of Tripoli in 1152. William of Tyre states that after Raymond's death, Baldwin III of Jerusalem ordered that 'all the nobles of those parts [swear] allegiance to the countess and her children', see: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVII, p. 214.

²²⁹ Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 130.

²³⁰ A. Livingstone, 'Powerful Allies and Dangerous Adversaries: Noblewomen in Medieval Society', in L.E. Mitchell, *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 22.

Nicholas Longespee my son.... The manor of Edgware'.²³¹ However, the laws in western Europe guaranteed the right to remarry at one's pleasure much later than in the Latin states. France in this period has been described as a 'mosaic of legal practices',²³² where some regions' inheritance laws were more sympathetic to women than others. According to Reyerson and Kuehn, however, French noble women were only able to inherit fiefs 'when there was no male heir'.²³³ This was different from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, as women in the Levant could become the holder of a fief through their dower rights even if there was a male heir, providing he was in his minority. However, the laws of the Latin states had begun to control women's rights to remarry during the thirteenth-century. Though widow's clearly had a large number of rights in Latin states, this does not mean that married women were not able to obtain power through the crusades.

Given the militaristic nature of the crusade movement, principalities were often toppled by the crusaders who then imposed their own leaders on the annexed territories. Women were frequently able to benefit from their husbands' military exploits in this endeavour. A good example of this would be the Fourth Crusade's capture of Constantinople. Following the city's fall in 1204, a leader of the movement, Baldwin, count of Flanders and Hainault, took on the title of Latin Emperor. Baldwin's wife, Marie of Champagne, would have been made empress though she died in Acre en

²³¹ Ela of Salisbury, 'Grant by Ela Countess of Salisbury of land from her inheritance to her son Nicholas Longespee, 1226-36', in trans. J. Ward (ed.), *Manchester Medieval Sources Series: Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066-1500*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 115.

²³² K. Reyerson and T. Kuehn, 'Women and Law in France and Italy', in L.E. Mitchell, *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, p. 131.

²³³ Reyerson, p. 132; In England women were not legally guaranteed the right to remarry at their pleasure until the creation of the *Magna Carta*, which stated, 'no widow is to be distrained to marry while she wishes to live without a husband, provided however that she gives security that she will not marry without our consent' (c.XX), see: D. Carpenter (ed.), *Magna Carta*, London, Penguin Classics, 2015, p. 41; However, this clause as with many of the stipulations of *Magna Carta* were intended to enshrine long standing customs in law. Therefore it is likely that women were often free to remarry as and when they liked long before 1215, see: J.C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, G. Garnett (ed.) and J. Hudson (ed.), 3rd edn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

route to Constantinople.²³⁴ One contemporary commentator, Alberic of Trois Fontaines, went so far as to state that 'when [Marie] was in Acre, the prince of Antioch [Bohemond V] visited her and rendered homage to her in place of her husband, in her role as empress of Constantinople'.²³⁵ Alfred Andrea has pointed out that Alberic is the only source that directly attests to this latter event,²³⁶ and this may be an indication that Alberic was trying to defend the legitimacy of Baldwin's reign. However, Robert Wolff was convinced that Alberic's claims were genuine due to a letter written by Innocent III, which 'quotes Bohemond V's own claim to have performed homage'.²³⁷ It is possible that Alberic gained knowledge of these events through some papal source though, this is just speculation. If the event he described did happen, then it is a clear indication of the quick social rise a noble woman could make if her husband advanced himself through conquest. The annexation of land during the crusades could also empower many women besides the monarchy. Prior to the capture of Constantinople, the crusaders drew up the March Pact in 1204. This document laid down the provisions for what would happen in the event of their victory. One of its stipulations concerning the land that would be divided among the crusaders says: 'each person to whom a fief has been assigned will hold it free and clear from heir to heir, both male and female'.²³⁸ This is clear recognition that women had the opportunity to come to prominence through the acquisition of the

²³⁴ Geoffrey de Villehardouin recounts these events, saying Marie died from an unknown disease and, 'all Christian people mourned her deeply... it was the cause of great grief to Emperor Baldwin and all the barons in that land, who had very much wanted her to be their lady', see: Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 85.

²³⁵ Alberic of Trois Fontaines, 'Chronicle', in trans. A.J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, Leiden, Koninklijke Brill NV, 2000, p. 306.

²³⁶ Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 292, n. 118.

²³⁷ See R.L. Wolff, 'Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1171-1225', *Speculum*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1952, p. 289.

²³⁸ 'The March Pact', in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 143.

Byzantine territories. Such an agreement on succession was not unique in the wider medieval world,²³⁹ but it did allow for more outlets for women to attain power.

Similarly, women also gained leadership roles when their husbands became incapacitated while on crusade. Margaret of Provence is a perfect example of this, as she took command of the Seventh Crusade when her husband Louis IX was captured. It is clear from the chronicle of Jean de Joinville that Margaret assumed a position of serious power. One aspect of her authority that he attests to was that she was in charge of the decision-making surrounding Louis' ransom. Joinville claims that while held captive, Louis could not (or would not) agree on the payment of any ransom but would instead 'advise the queen to pay it',²⁴⁰ as the decision ultimately lay with her.²⁴¹ Joinville also highlighted Margaret's authority when describing how she organised provisions for the remaining crusaders within Damietta: 'She told them that it would not be hunger that made them leave, "for I will buy all the provisions in this city and from now on I will retain you all at the king's expense"'.²⁴² While commenting on the composition of Joinville's work, Caroline Smith noted that, 'the crusade section of this text is entirely different in character and concerns than those that frame it'.²⁴³ This indicates that Joinville's writings on the Seventh Crusade were written or based on writings he made during or not long after the events, which adds credence to the claims he asserts about Margaret. Another contemporary who notes Margaret's authority was Robert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He states in a letter addressed to 'the cardinals' in 1250: 'on the orders of my lady the Queen and with the approval of the lord Legate and other great men, ten galleys and many other

²³⁹ A very similar policy on female succession was upheld by Frederick Barbarossa when he elevated Austria from a march to a duchy, see: B. Arnold, *Medieval Germany, 500-1300: A Political Interpretation*, London, MacMillan Education UK, 1997, p. 109.

²⁴⁰ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 230, v. 342.

²⁴¹ Some historians completely pass over Margaret's involvement in these negotiations, such as: J. Richard, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, trans. J. Birrell, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 130.

²⁴² Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 244, v. 399.

²⁴³ Smith, *Crusading in the Age of Joinville*, p. 58.

armed vessels were sent with a great number of armed men to the King's aid'.²⁴⁴ Margaret's leadership was undoubtedly very capable and well respected.²⁴⁵ However, women could also attain power during the crusades without a need for violence or the death of a loved one.

The crusades brought Europeans into constant contact with numerous Hellenic and Levantine nations. Intermarriage between the ruling classes of the powers within the Levant was common, and a frequent means of ensuring peaceful relations. Such marriages could serve as an opportunity for woman to rise in social rank. A prominent example can be seen in Bertha of Sulzbach, who married Manuel I Komnenos in 1146 and remained empress of Byzantium until her death in 1159. This marriage can be seen as an example of a Latin woman rising in social status through the diplomacy of the crusades. Otto of Freising, a contemporary German chronicler, states that the Byzantines, 'asked that some girl of royal blood be given in marriage to the emperor's son Manuel. The prince [Conrad III of Germany] selected for him instead a sister of his wife'.²⁴⁶ Otto's use of the word 'instead', insinuates that Bertha was not considered to be of royal blood, and therefore not the social rank that the Byzantines had envisaged.²⁴⁷ Bertha's father was in fact Berengar II count of Sulzbach (d.1125), not a member of a royal family. According to Harry Magoulias, the marriage between Bertha and Manuel was arranged between 1140 and 1142 by Manuel's father John II, 'once Manuel became emperor, however, the choice seemed unworthy of

²⁴⁴ Robert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, 'Robert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to the Cardinals, 15 May 1250', in Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade*, p. 105.

²⁴⁵ Illston agreed with this assessment, though he cast some doubt on whether Margaret was a continually respected leader, or whether Louis used her leadership as a gambit in his dealing with the Muslims, see: Illston, 'An Entirely Masculine Activity?', p. 67.

²⁴⁶ Otto of Freising, *The Deed of Frederick Barbarossa: Otto of Freising and his Continuator, Rahewin*, trans. C.C. Mierow, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1966, bk. I, p. 54.

²⁴⁷ Alicia Simpson has indicated that in an early version of Niketas Choniates' chronicle, 'the author erroneously states that [Bertha] came from a regal family', whereas in a revised version of the chronicle Niketas changed his definition of Bertha's parentage to a, 'most illustrious family', see: A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 81.

his imperial rank'.²⁴⁸ John Kinnamos diplomatically evaded the topic of Bertha's social standing prior to the wedding when he politely remarked: '[Bertha] was not inferior to any of those of that time in propriety of character and spiritual virtue'.²⁴⁹ Paul Stephenson stated that Kinnamos' comments indicated that Bertha's, 'suitability was a subject of much interest at court'.²⁵⁰ Though Bertha was treated with suspicion, women could clearly rise considerably in social standing through the diplomacy of the crusades.

Many of the means by which women could rise in social status or attain queenship during the crusades were also possible throughout Europe in the same period. The significance of the crusades was that they provided a higher probability of social advancement for women and/or new outlets for such opportunities. This meant that the Latin population of the Levant had proportionately more women in positions of leadership (primarily through the ownership of land) than in Europe. This would have had a pronounced impact on the contemporary perception of female leadership and womanhood in Outremer. It is also clear that more women came into significant leadership positions during the twelfth than in the thirteenth-century. The reason for the decline in the number of female leaders is, to a large extent, due to the legal changes that were put in place to ensure more men held fiefs that owed military services. It is possible that other reasons influenced these legal changes other than the military needs of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, such as increasingly misogynistic perspectives of the Levantine Franks. Chapter Two concluded that the culture of Outremer became increasingly androcentric in the thirteenth-century; it is likely that this was coupled with a growing intolerance of female leadership. Through studying the perceptions

²⁴⁸ Magoulas, 'Notes to Pages 32-38', in *O City of Byzantium*, p. 376, n. 140.

²⁴⁹ John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, pp. 36-37.

²⁵⁰ P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 213.

contemporaries had of queens of the Latin states it can be assessed how gendered-perceptions of leadership changed during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries amongst the population of the Latin East. This will determine some of the other factors that catalysed the decline in the number of female leaders in the Levant during the thirteenth-century.

Gender and Portrayals of Queens

The manner in which contemporary writers portrayed queens of the Latin states was eclectic. The bulk of medieval writing on these women is full of misogynistic rhetoric. This was often triggered simply by the fact that the rulers were women rather than any specific instances of poor judgment by these rulers. Nevertheless, many contemporary writers were forced to concede that numerous female regents of the Latin states were effective monarchs. William of Tyre for instance disliked Queen Melisende of Jerusalem to a certain extent but remarked: 'she had risen so far above the normal status of women that she dared to undertake important measures. It was her ambition to emulate the magnificence of the greatest and noblest princes to show herself in no wise inferior to them'.²⁵¹ Female leaders such as Melisende are often presented as anomalies by European and Levantine chroniclers alike. However, in the case of Levantine writers this attitude is paradoxical given the high proportion of female fief holders. This may indicate a persistent retention of European anti-female rhetoric, despite the realities of their society.

While writing on the high number of women in positions of power in the Latin East, Sylvia Schein flatly stated: 'the factors that contributed to create this phenomenon are all typical of colonial societies at a certain stage of their development and in no way connected to, or an

²⁵¹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVI, pp. 139-141.

outcome of, the image of women, which in all medieval colonial states was the stereotypical image as developed in Western Europe'.²⁵² Schein is right in saying that many women gained positions of power through circumstance rather than a change of culture. However, this does not mean that the culture did not change as a consequence of the rise in the number of powerful women. The pervasive misogynistic rhetoric of writers resident in the Latin states is undeniable, though this is not irrefutable evidence for the lack of any change in the Frankish-Levantine perception of the capabilities of the female gender, as many writers were anti-female clerics.

Contrary to Schein, I would argue that a Hartzian culture existed in Outremer, with regard to perceptions of the female gender.²⁵³ Louis Hartz argued that Americans habitually defined their culture by their liberal beliefs, yet throughout the nation's history inequality had pervaded their society. He stated that, 'a feudalism that has once been liberal can never be really feudal, and its impact on the history of a nation is bound to be unique'.²⁵⁴ John Lewis summarized Hartz's theories: 'Hartz finds the clue to an understanding of the American tradition not in perpetual conflict but in underlying American agreement about basic norms'.²⁵⁵ It is possible that a similar culture existed in Outremer, in which the writing produced often promulgated misogyny, while an undercurrent of more relaxed views on women's freedom existed within the society. Hartz's theories were originally applied to a colonial society however, this does not hinder the application of his thinking to the Latin East, as it too may be approached as colonial society. Prawer was an

²⁵² Schein, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 141.

²⁵³ One of the first to use Hartzian theory within crusade studies was Benjamin Kedar, though he applied this thinking to the use of serfs within the Latin States, see: B.Z. Kedar, "'The Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem – The First European Colonial Society?'" Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East: Jerusalem and Haifa, 2-6 July 1987', in Kedar, *The Horns of Hattin*, p. 351.

²⁵⁴ L. Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World inc., 1955, p. 148.

²⁵⁵ J.D. Lewis, 'The liberal tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Thought since the Revolution by Louis Hartz', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1955, p. 1155.

avid exponent of the idea that the Latin states were early European colonies. He argued this when saying that the Latin states were, 'a mediaeval society transplanted to the Eastern Mediterranean, which created its own social and cultural patterns of existence beyond the physical and cultural boundaries of Europe... in this sense it is justified to regard the Crusader kingdom as the first European colonial society'.²⁵⁶ As such, the Latin states may be studied as colonies with a culture surrounding gender that was divergent from Europe.

Lois Huneycutt summarised the paradox of medieval misogyny toward female leaders when stating: 'writings on gender attributed qualities such as capriciousness, physical weakness, lust, instability, lack of intelligence, irrationality, and a tendency toward duplicity to the female sex, [while] men of the feudal nobility routinely expected women to occupy positions requiring grave judgement'.²⁵⁷ As more women came to prominence through the inheritance of land, the male population of Outremer became increasingly reliant on its female counterparts. Yet, a culture of misogyny persisted in the written works produced in Outremer. This was possibly due to the continued contact the settlers of Outremer had with Europeans and European ideas. It is also conceivable that they continued to use anti-female rhetoric for the same reasons they continued to use a feudal economy, it was what they knew and what their forefathers had done. The problem with understanding gender perceptions in the Latin East is the same as for the rest of the medieval world, as clerical men composed the bulk of extant writing. This makes it difficult to gauge how the remainder of society perceived the female gender and its relationship to leadership. One of the more pervasive beliefs among Levantine (as well as European) writers was that the male gender was more synonymous with leadership than the female.

²⁵⁶ Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p. ix.

²⁵⁷ L.L. Huneycutt, 'Female Succession and the Language of Power in the Writings of Twelfth-Century Churchmen', in J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1993, p. 189.

William of Tyre's chronicle provides many examples of this thinking. He relates how after the capture and subsequent death of Joscelin II count of Edessa (d.1159), Joscelin's wife Beatrice assumed control of the county. Beatrice's governance impressed William, although he reveals his belief in the superiority of the male gender when stating that she had governed: 'far beyond the strength of a woman'.²⁵⁸ Despite William's earlier castigation of Joscelin's capabilities as a leader,²⁵⁹ he laments: 'in punishment for our sins, these two countries were deprived of the wise counsels of their princes and, under the government of women, were holding their own with difficulty'.²⁶⁰ The other female leader to whom William was referring was the aforementioned Constance of Antioch.²⁶¹ William's statements illustrate that he felt that even the poor leadership of a male ruler was preferable to the competent leadership of a woman.

William was not alone in this perspective on female leadership, as the Muslim commentator Ibn al-Athir corroborates. When describing the political situation in the Frankish held territories in the Levant in February 1198 Ibn al-Athir states that, 'the Franks had no king to unite them, their affairs being in the hands of a woman, the queen [Isabella I of Jerusalem], they came to an agreement to send to the king of Cyprus... and arranged his marriage to the queen'.²⁶² Ibn al-Athir's comments highlight the problem that the Levantine Franks perceived. The laws of the Kingdom of Jerusalem allowed for women to inherit titles and act as regents, and there was a

²⁵⁸ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVII, pp. 201-202.

²⁵⁹ William of Tyre, bk. XVII, p. 201. '[Joscelin] was a lazy, idle man, given over to low and dissolute pleasures'.

²⁶⁰ William of Tyre, bk. XVII, p. 202; William's misogyny is also evident when he describes Beatrice and Constance's rule during the crisis of Edessa's capture by Nur ad-Din in 1151: 'that entire province [Edessa] and the land of Antioch as well, abandoned to feminine rule', see: William of Tyre, bk. XVII, p. 207.

²⁶¹ William's comments on Constance's independent reign are just as disparaging. He states that she preferred, 'the free and independent life. She paid little heed to the needs of her people and was far more interested in enjoying the pleasures of life', see: William of Tyre, bk. XVII, p. 213.

²⁶² Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 3*, p. 30.

higher probability of this occurring given the social circumstances of the time. However, the Franks still perceived female leadership as inadequate, especially during conflict. This shows a dichotomy within their culture in which they enacted laws that, indirectly or otherwise, allowed for greater opportunities for women yet misogyny among the barony was rife. As Erin Jordan remarked: ‘a woman engaged in political activity during the thirteenth-century challenged a number of gender norms entrenched in medieval society, particularly those that positioned women as subordinate to men, characterizing them as incapable of effective governance’.²⁶³ This culture often manifested in the Latin states, particularly in the later twelfth-century, the perceived need for a female ruler to have a husband.

The medieval perception that a female ruler needed a husband to perform as the active leader of her people is most evident in accounts of the coronation of Sibylla of Jerusalem. Following the death of her son Baldwin V (d.1186), Sibylla inherited the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Sibylla was already married to Guy de Lusignan, however Guy was despised by many of the Frankish barons and was considered socially inferior to a queen, and unfit to remain Sibylla’s husband. The Frankish aristocracy believed that Sibylla ought to pick a new husband to act as regent in her stead. Roger of Wendover (d.1236), an English chronicler, believed that Sibylla was reluctant to accept the queenship of Jerusalem. This belief is steeped in gender prejudices. He fancifully portrays Sibylla as: ‘acquiesced in tears, and being solemnly crowned queen’.²⁶⁴ Roger was writing in England in the thirteenth-century,²⁶⁵ so the accuracy of this assertion is

²⁶³ E.L. Jordan, ‘Exploring the Limits of Female Largesse: The Power of Female Patrons in Thirteenth-Century Flanders and Hainaut’, in T. Earenfight (ed.), *Women and Wealth in Late Medieval Europe*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010, p. 155.

²⁶⁴ Roger of Wendover, ‘Roger of Wendover on the Fall of Jerusalem’, trans. J.A. Giles, in S.J. Allen (ed.), and E. Amt (ed.), *The Crusades: A Reader*, Peterborough, Broadview Press, 2003, p. 159.

²⁶⁵ Roger’s work also has numerous inconsistencies and he rarely questioned his sources, see: L.M. Ruch, ‘Roger of Wendover’, in Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, p. 1291.

questionable. It is more likely that he was trying to portray Sibylla as being conscious of her inability to rule due to her gender. He later illustrates Sibylla as a dutiful wife in choosing her husband Guy to be king in her place: 'she saved the crown for her husband, and her husband for herself'.²⁶⁶ Guy of Bazoches, a participant in the Third Crusade writing not long after the events,²⁶⁷ took a similar stance when he stated: 'by the wish and decision of his most faithful wife, [Guy] was crowned as her king'.²⁶⁸ Roger of Howden similarly quoted Sibylla as stating: 'I, Sibylla, choose for myself as king and as my husband Guy of Lusignan... for as the scripture says, "whom God has joined, let not man put asunder"'.²⁶⁹

The Lyon *Eracles*' narrative of this series of events differs from these other accounts. The author quotes the patriarch of Jerusalem saying to Sibylla: 'Lady, you are a woman, it is fitting you should have a man by you who can help you govern your kingdom'.²⁷⁰ The author's suggestion, though disparaging of a woman's capabilities, does suggest that whomever Sibylla chose would govern alongside her rather than in her stead. This is significantly different from Roger of Wendover's belief that the king should reign alone. Similarly, the author of the *Itinerarium* briefly summarised Sibylla's actions by stating: 'when she claimed her father's throne [Guy] too received the symbol of royal power',²⁷¹ implying that Sibylla was in no way cast aside. Sarah Lambert summarised the attitudes of chroniclers of this period stating that it, 'is evident [there was] a lack of any real consensus about the way in which a reigning queen should be treated in political history and an inability fully to resolve the tensions between dynasty, gender and the demands of

²⁶⁶ Roger of Wendover, *The Crusades*, p. 159

²⁶⁷ C. Bratu, 'Guido de Bazochis, in Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, p. 741.

²⁶⁸ Guy of Bazoches, 'The Coronation of Guy and Sibyla (1186)', in Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 155.

²⁶⁹ Roger of Howden, 'Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi et Gesta Regis Ricardi Benedicti Abbatis', in Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 155.

²⁷⁰ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 26, v. 18

²⁷¹ *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, bk. I, p. 102.

politics'.²⁷² Despite the heightened frequency of women inheriting leadership positions in the Levant, the Levantine Franks of the later twelfth-century became disparaging of female leadership. Rather than growing accustomed to the concept of female leadership, they began to ensure actively that it did not occur.

This more pronounced opposition to female leadership began to take hold of Frankish Levantine society during Sibylla's reign and into the early years of the thirteenth-century. This is what Sarah Lambert termed the, 'progressive diminution of the idea of queenship'.²⁷³ Sibylla's immediate successors' authority as independent queens quickly deteriorated. This can be seen clearly during the reign of Isabella I of Jerusalem (d.1205). According to the *Itinerarium*, following the assassination of Isabella's husband, Conrad of Montferrat, the Franks became furious that Isabella refused to relinquish the seat of her power, the city of Tyre.²⁷⁴ In response, 'they immediately elected [Henry of Champagne] their prince and lord... they also begged him to marry [Isabella], to whom the kingdom belonged by hereditary right'.²⁷⁵ The *Itinerarium's* choice of words is significant, as it acknowledges Isabella's right to the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem but not the authority to rule it. The emphasis on the need for male rulers became more pronounced during the thirteenth-century. George Akropolites highlights this culture, when describing the ascension of John of Brienne to the Latin throne of Constantinople in 1229, '[the people] asked that he come to them and be proclaimed emperor... and take as his son-in-law Baldwin whom they thought they had in line for succession; for the king [John] had a little girl'.²⁷⁶ The Baldwin that George refers to was the then eleven-year-old future Baldwin II Latin Emperor,

²⁷² Lambert, *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, p. 168.

²⁷³ Lambert, p. 168.

²⁷⁴ *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, bk. V, p. 308.

²⁷⁵ *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, bk. V, p. 309.

²⁷⁶ George Akropolites, *The History*, trans. R. Macrides, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 184, v. 27.

the brother Robert I Latin Emperor (d.1228). It seems likely that the Latin barony in Constantinople had no intention of allowing John's daughter to succeed him but rather, they wished to ensure that she married a male heir of their choice. Though as Guy Perry noted, due to the dearth of contemporary evidence, 'we can know only very little about John's relations with the Latin Constantinopolitan barons who had invited him in'.²⁷⁷

There is a potential trend within Outremer's queenship, with a rise in the perceived authority of female leadership during the twelfth-century. Melisende's rule during the mid-twelfth-century can be seen as a high point of queenship's authority in the Latin East. Her reign continued through the rule of both her husband Fulk and her son Baldwin. However, there was a noticeable decline in the authority of the next Latin queen of Jerusalem who acted as a regent, Sibylla. This marks the beginning of a continued deterioration in the authority of queenship into the thirteenth-century. It is possible that these shifts in perceptions of female leadership were linked to the trends in society examined in chapter two. This is plausible as it is around the capture of Jerusalem in 1187 that the most significant changes in Frankish Levantine perspectives occur, both on concerning female participation in crusading and female leadership. The surge in the number of women taking part in crusading following Jerusalem's fall in 1187 may have triggered anti-female leadership sentiment among the Levantine Franks. There is relatively little scholarship that compares queenship of the Latin states to that of Europe and whether one was influenced by or tried to replicate the other. However, in order to examine whether the trends observed in the queenship of the Latin East were localised to the Levant or were in fact pan-European shifts in the

²⁷⁷ G. Perry, *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c. 1175-1237*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 163.

culture of queenship, the reactions of European female rulers who visited the Near East must be examined.

Latin Queenship and Europe

There are indications that the culture of queenship in the Latin states differed from that in Europe. From the inception of the crusader states in the late eleventh century, the settlers attempted to transpose then current European political culture into their newly formed kingdom. Prawer states that, 'the feudal system was introduced in the crusader states... mainly due to the mentality of the European nobles and knights who clung to traditional patterns of social cohesion'.²⁷⁸ He goes on to say that the feudal aspect of the crusader states was unique in its, 'unchanging rigidity'.²⁷⁹ This provided for a very different context in which crusader queens and female leaders operated as opposed to their European counterparts. This combined with the unusually high male death rates in the Levant meant that the culture of female leadership in the Latin states was unlikely to be replicated in Europe. That being said, European queens, especially those that visited the Near East, may have tried to act with the same empowerment that they witnessed in female leaders of the Frankish Levant. Sarah Lambert stressed that, 'it is important to bear in mind that there was no settled law on [female succession] in western Europe in the twelfth-century'.²⁸⁰ As such, the trends in female leadership in various medieval European nations in the twelfth-century were often susceptible to fluctuation and open to outside influences. This combined with the heightened prevalence of female leaders in the Levant in the 1200s may have amplified the effect on visitors to the Holy Land. Individuals such as Margaret of Provence were

²⁷⁸ Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p. 128.

²⁷⁹ Prawer, p. 128.

²⁸⁰ Lambert, *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, p. 155.

certainly affected by their crusading experience; in Margaret's case it elevated her authority, as previously discussed. By studying these visitors to the Latin East the difference in the culture of female leadership may be observed.

A prime example of this can be seen in Eleanor of Aquitaine who accompanied her husband Louis VII on the Second Crusade. Eleanor elicited extremely polemic reactions from both contemporaries and modern historians due to the empowered decisions she made on crusade, particularly with regard to her marriage to Louis. John of Salisbury states that after an arduous journey through Asia Minor the couple arrived at Antioch where they were, 'nobly entertained there by Prince Raymond'.²⁸¹ Marion Meade remarked that, 'the entertainment – the troubadours, minstrels, and Saracen dancers – was all very gay, very ribald, very characteristic of [Eleanor's] grandfather's court at Poitiers'.²⁸² Eleanor found the social life in Antioch to be very appealing and wished to remain there while Louis wanted to press on to Jerusalem. John of Salisbury states that when Louis tried to 'tear her away, she mentioned their kinship, saying it was not lawful for them to remain together as man and wife, since they were related in the fourth and fifth degrees'.²⁸³ This is significant for two reasons, firstly it highlights the power that Eleanor wielded in being able to demand a divorce from her husband, the king of France, the ramifications of which had tremendous effects. Secondly, John's statements insinuate that Eleanor had undergone a change of character while being on crusade. Elizabeth Norton remarked that this episode in Antioch, 'seems to have been the first time divorce was mentioned [by Eleanor]'.²⁸⁴ It is possible that the

²⁸¹ John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis: Memoirs of the Papal Court*, trans. M. Chibnall, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1956, p. 52.

²⁸² Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, p. 127.

²⁸³ John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, p. 53.

²⁸⁴ E. Norton, *She Wolves: The Notorious Queens of England*, Stroud, The History Press, 2011, p. 59; Eleanor's threat was not made lightly, D. Owen stated, 'their marriage would never recover from the bruising it received

culture in the Frankish Levant was more social and even less patriarchal as discussed in chapter two. This may have been more appealing to Eleanor than the French court and as such the culture had a significant effect on her. Alison Weir remarked that, 'Eleanor seems to have viewed the crusade as an opportunity to escape the boring routine of the court in favour of adventure'.²⁸⁵ This certainly seems likely as William of Newburgh claimed that Eleanor was so bored by her husband she described him as, 'a monk, not a king'.²⁸⁶

Eleanor undoubtedly had other reasons for divorcing Louis but the affect of Antioch's social life after the hardships of the expedition were the breaking point for her. William of Tyre goes so far as to suggest Eleanor committed adultery with her uncle, Raymond of Poitiers, the prince of Antioch, while she stayed in the city: 'the queen readily assented to this design, for she was a foolish woman'.²⁸⁷ Numerous other medieval authors also claimed Eleanor was unfaithful to Louis, though the accuracy of these claims are dubious.²⁸⁸ Odo de Deuil, an eyewitness to the Second Crusade, makes no mention of such explicit rumours surrounding Eleanor while in Antioch.²⁸⁹ Insinuations that Eleanor was influenced by sexual desire for other men in her decision to divorce Louis were pervasive. The chronicle of the Minstrel of Reims is a classic example of this, written

during their brief stay in Antioch', see: D.D.R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1993, p. 25.

²⁸⁵ A. Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: By the Wrath of God, Queen of England*, London, Pimlico, 2000, p. 50; Similarly to Weir, Marion Meade also commented on the crusade's effect of Eleanor stating: 'after [Eleanor's] journeys to the East, she knew better than anyone the exquisite possibilities open to a person of determination and imagination', see: Meade, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, p. 168.

²⁸⁶ William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, trans. P.G. Walsh, and trans. M.J. Kennedy, Warminster, Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1988, p. 129; Williams' quote is probably apocryphal however, he was alive at the time of Eleanor's divorce from Louis and subsequent reign as queen of England. Also, the characterization of Louis as a monk fits with the popular perception of him as very pious. See: L.M. Ruch, 'William of Newburgh', in Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, pp. 1512-1513.

²⁸⁷ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVI, p. 180.

²⁸⁸ Weir believes that given the number of sources that attest to Eleanor's infidelity and Louis' severe attitude to Raymond of Poitiers an affair was likely taking place, see: Weir, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, pp. 67-68.

²⁸⁹ Odo de Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*; Although, as Weir points out, Odo would not have wanted the, 'official account of the crusade to be sullied', see: Weir, p. 67.

over a hundred years after the events, it fancifully describes how Eleanor tried to elope with Saladin.²⁹⁰ Despite its factual inaccuracies (Saladin was a young boy when Eleanor was in Outremer), the minstrel's story shows the perceived catalytic effect the Near East had on Eleanor's individual decision making. Her decision to divorce Louis was also considered by contemporaries to have influenced many of her decisions in later life. The author of the *Eracles* for instance stated that her actions to stop her son Richard from marrying a sister of Philip II were because: 'she hated the heirs of King Louis of France, her former husband'.²⁹¹ As well as this, Eleanor's decision during the crusade had enormous implications for European geopolitics. When she divorced Louis she would take her inheritance with her, the vast duchy of Aquitaine, ultimately transferring it to the Plantagenets when she married Henry II of England.

The agency with which Eleanor made these decisions has been questioned well into the modern era. Thomas Bergin remarked that: 'the divorce from Louis was the most important political act of Eleanor's life... one wonders whether she really understood its implications'.²⁹² Comments like this belittle Eleanor's intellectual capabilities and licence in her decision-making. Such accusations also avoid investigating the factors that influenced Eleanor which are evidently complex. Though the effect of Eleanor's pilgrimage to the Near East had radical implications for her, and for Europe, her case is not an ordinary one.

There are other examples of European queens that visited the Levant on crusade and became empowered following their pilgrimage. Margaret of Provence is one such person.

²⁹⁰ He stated: 'when queen Eleanor saw the king's weakness, and she heard men speak of the goodness and strength and understanding and generosity of Saladin, she conceived a great passion for him in her heart', see: Minstrel of Reims, *A Thirteenth-Century Minstrel's chronicle (Récits d'un Ménestrel de Reims)*, trans. R. Levine, New York, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, p. 12.

²⁹¹ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 99, v. 110.

²⁹² Bergin, *The Sewanee Review*, p. lxxvii.

Margaret's leadership of the Seventh Crusade while her husband Louis IX remained in captivity has already been discussed. However, after Louis was freed and the crusaders headed back to France Margaret maintained a high degree of authority. While traveling back to France, her contemporary Jean de Joinville states that, 'the queen and all the king's council agreed that he should land [at the castle of Hyères], since this was his brother's territory'.²⁹³ Clearly the crusaders had reached western Europe and had their king to make executive decisions, but Margaret was still being consulted. This contrasts with Joinville's earlier discussion of the events prior to Louis's capture in which Joinville seldom mentions Margaret or any consultation with her on the crusade's movements. Rather, he mentions the influence of Louis's mother, Blanche of Castile, far more frequently in this section of the book. At the time of the Seventh Crusade Blanche had been left in France as regent for a second time,²⁹⁴ the other time being when Louis was a minor. It is clear from Joinville's account however, that following the crusade, Louis respect for Margaret's leadership had increased. It is possible that Joinville did this intentionally to depict Margaret as overcoming Blanche, as the two were bitter rivals for Louis' attention.²⁹⁵ That said, crusading would have offered women a viable means to engage with a variety of cultures and leadership styles, therefore bettering their own. In the words of Parsons: 'access to power was easier for queens who commanded strong cross-cultural perspectives'.²⁹⁶ This is also true of queens of the Latin states who had interests in Europe.

²⁹³ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 308, v. 652.

²⁹⁴ Vincent de Beauvais, 'Speculum Historiale', in Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade*, p. 124.

²⁹⁵ For more information on Blanche of Castile, see: M. Shadis, 'Blanche of Castile and Facing's "Medieval Queenship": Reassessing the Argument', in K. Nolan (ed.), *Capetian Women*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 137-161.

²⁹⁶ J.C. Parsons, 'Family, Sex and Power: The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship', in Parsons, *Medieval Queenship*, p. 4.

Queens in the Levant were intimately connected to the geopolitics in Europe. It would be misleading to think of the aristocracy in Outremer as living completely separately from their contemporaries in Europe. Many Europeans continuously journeyed to the Near East and settled there. In doing so many of the nobles among these settlers intermarried with the Levantine Frankish aristocracy. The progeny of these marriages often sought claims to land and titles back in Europe. Looking at queenship in its familial context, Parsons said that, 'whether or not the lineage defined itself in agnatic terms; women thus retained claims to power and influence within the feudal family'.²⁹⁷ This was true of crusader queens like Alice of Champagne (d.1246), who laid claim to the county of Champagne in France. Jean de Joinville recounts that: 'the French barons were all so hostile to Count Thibaut of Champagne that they decided to send for the queen of Cyprus [Alice], in the hope that she... might dispossess Count Thibaut'.²⁹⁸ Alice never captured Champagne however Joinville does say that as a settlement, 'the count of Champagne gave the queen of Cyprus land and a yearly income of about 2,000 livres, while the king paid 40,000 livres on the count of Champagne's behalf'.²⁹⁹ Joinville's account does not necessarily indicate that western Europeans thought of Latin queens as being overbearing or having too much influence in European affairs. Rather, he and other commentators originally from Europe appear to have placed more emphasis on the authority of these queens than the Levantine Franks did. This seems particularly pronounced during the thirteenth-century as general perception of female leadership in the Latin States began to decline.

This trend seems particularly pronounced in the artistic renderings of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem in medieval copies of William of Tyre's chronicle, *The Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*.

²⁹⁷ Parsons, p. 3.

²⁹⁸ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 165, v. 79.

²⁹⁹ Jean de Joinville, p. 167, v. 86.

William states in his work that following the death of Fulk of Jerusalem, 'Baldwin was solemnly anointed, consecrated, and crowned together with his mother'.³⁰⁰ There were significant differences in the manner in which European and Levantine artists depicted this event. Jaroslav Floda determined that images of Queen Melisende began being added to copies of *The Deeds* produced in both western Europe and the Levant simultaneously during 'the third quarter of the thirteenth century... it is perhaps more unexpected that the Western examples are greater in number'.³⁰¹ Floda goes on to state that unlike the copies produced in the Levant, 'in the West, the crowning of Baldwin III and Melisende is the single most frequently represented pictorial subject'.³⁰² He mainly deals with the iconographic, dynastic, and gendered influences in these depictions of Melisende. Floda does not offer any suggestion as to what the discrepancies in the number and subject of the images indicate about the wider perceptions of Melisende in the respective places the images were produced. The high number of images of her coronation in European-made books may indicate that such an authoritative female leader such as Melisende was considered far more anomalous amongst a medieval European audience and so was more frequently depicted. It is also possible that Western Europeans had a greater appreciation for female leadership and romanticised Melisende's reign. Simultaneously, those artists creating depictions in the Latin states, on the other hand, may have found female leadership less surprising and felt less need to depict it. Alternatively, it could be the case that the culture within the Frankish Levant had become comparatively more misogynistic than in Europe. As a consequence, Levantine Franks may have found images of Melisende being crowned alongside her son as equals to be distasteful. It is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions as to why there was such

³⁰⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVI, p. 139.

³⁰¹ Floda, *Gesta*, p. 98.

³⁰² Floda, p. 101.

inconsistency over depictions of Melisende's coronation.³⁰³ It is evident however, that there was some significant divergence in the perceptions of queenship between Europe and the Levant during the thirteenth-century.

It is difficult to gauge the effect that Latin queens and the culture of female leadership in the Levant had on their European counterparts. The extent of their influence may well have been to inspire contemporary European female rulers to strive for greater authority. That alone is indicative of a culture of female leadership in the Latin states that was more empowered than that of Europe. It may also show that, particularly in the twelfth-century, the populous of the Latin States were to some degree more tolerant of female leadership than the populations of western Europe. This would lend strength to the argument that the misogynistic writings of the period were not representative of the attitudes of the general population or the customs and laws in place. Nevertheless, it is clear that the rapid increase in the number of female rulers in the Levant during the 1100s was met by a wide resurgence of misogynistic perspectives around the turn of the thirteenth-century. This is evident not only by the change in legal codes but also the attitudes to successors to the throne of Jerusalem like Sibylla or Isabella I. Where Levantine settlers wished to promulgate a feudal androcentric society and distance themselves from the prominence of female leaders of the twelfth-century, western Europeans may well have idealised and romanticised many of the crusader queens a century after their demise. This shows that the Frankish Levantine perceptions of the female gender/leadership within the Latin East were

³⁰³ For further discussion on this topic, as well as the differences in thirteenth-century French translations of William's account of Melisende's coronation, see: S. Lambert, 'Images of Queen Melisende', in Dresvina and Sparks, *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, pp. 140-165.

consistently at odds with the perceptions of western Europeans, despite the fluctuations of those perceptions in both regions.

One aspect of female leadership that has not been significantly approached in this thesis so far, or indeed in many studies of women in the crusades, is the actions women-leaders made in negotiations. The following chapter will examine women's engagement in the dialogue of the crusades. This will determine: some of the aspects that would have made crusading particularly appealing to noblewomen, Frankish Levantine society's perception of the female gender, as well as the clergy's reaction to women vocally representing a Christian movement. Given the absence of sources written by women who went on crusade, one of the only ways to examine their attitudes and objectives is through studying their actions in negotiations.

Chapter Four: Dichotomy of Dialogue

The Female Voice in Crusading Negotiations and Religious Military Orders

The involvement of women in the diplomacy of the crusades is an area that has been under researched by historians. Study of women as mediators within the wider medieval context has attracted a considerable level of scrutiny,³⁰⁴ and some individual crusading-women have been examined within that literature. Notable examples such as, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Margaret of Provence, have received much attention, particularly the latter for her part in negotiations during Louis IX's imprisonment. Yet, there are a wide variety of lesser-known women who became embroiled in diplomacy with Byzantine and Muslim delegates. However, women's involvement in diplomacy was not restricted to times of crisis or social upheaval. The various crusader factions in the Near East were also frequently at odds with each other, and women often were at the forefront of negotiations and agreements between parties. These women often represented or mediated between members of their own families, something which historians of the medieval family construct (who, as seen in the historiographical chapter, tend to avoid in depth discussion of the crusades) should pay more attention to. This chapter will argue that crusading women frequently negotiated with Muslim and Byzantine authorities of their own accord, and in a range of political situations. I also discuss how women were frequently chosen specifically to represent their male counterparts in talks with other crusader powers. The manner in which women became

³⁰⁴ See: C. de Mérimond, 'La Femme et la paix dans la symbolique des décors à la fin de l'époque médiévale', in A. Bleton-Ruget (ed.), M. Pacaut (ed.), and M. Rubellin (ed.), *Regards croisés sur l'oeuvre de Georges Duby: Femmes et féodalité*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000, pp. 197-211; L.L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in Carpenter and MacLean, *Power of the Weak*, pp. 126-146.

entangled in crusading diplomacy will be shown to reflect contemporary Frankish Levantine attitudes toward the female voice.

Being involved in diplomacy is a good indicator that a person was held in high esteem, both from those they represented and also from those they approached. During the period of the crusades, female figures became increasingly prominent in medieval Christian thought. Given that so many women participated in the crusades, it is possible that clergymen and members of religious military orders found a new respect for women's contribution to Christendom. Part of this study will examine whether the rise in cults of the Virgin Mary and popularity of female saints in Christendom may have been stimulated by the rise in the number of women taking active and public positions in the crusades.

When speaking on Crusader-Muslim diplomacy, Yvonne Friedman remarked that the process of peace negotiations was not about peace between religious groups but between political entities. She said that, 'whether entered into by a state or a nonstate entity, peace-making was the prerogative of the king or local prince and thus, an aspect of his power, just as war making was'.³⁰⁵ Though Friedman states that such negotiations should not be viewed as opposing religious groups making peace, contemporary Christians would likely have viewed any crusader representative as being, to some extent, a representative of Christianity. By extension of Friedman's thinking, this chapter will ascertain whether women displayed their own authority through their involvement or direction in negotiations between crusaders and Muslim/Byzantine factions as well as religious organisations. Such displays of power by women in the Levant would have certainly brought

³⁰⁵ Y. Friedman, 'Negotiations and Peace Treaties between Muslims and Crusaders in the Latin East', *Common Knowledge*, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 84.

recognition from both secular and religious authorities throughout the Near East as well as wider Christendom. Chroniclers often noted events where women were involved in diplomacy as a means to emphasise the individuals' authority as a respected voice. However, it will be shown that these occurrences follow the same trends in the perceptions of women-crusaders that has been seen in previous chapters: a rise during the twelfth-century, followed by a steep decline during the thirteenth-century.

Crusader Women and Non-Latin Powers

Eleanor of Aquitaine's importance is emphasised in Odo de Deuil's narrative by his description of how Byzantine nobles singled her out for correspondence. He explains that the German contingent of the Second Crusade had already passed through Constantinople and had become embroiled in numerous fights with the Byzantines, souring crusader-Byzantine relations. As the French contingent of the expedition passed through the city, many among their army wanted to attack the Byzantines to remove any threat.³⁰⁶ This was evidently a very politically tense situation. Yet, during this time, Odo states that, 'occasionally the [Byzantine] empress wrote to the queen'.³⁰⁷ Any correspondence between the two factions would have been influential in mitigating tensions, however, Odo omits any indication of what was said between the two women. The Byzantine empress who was communicating with Eleanor was Bertha of Sulzbach, who was previously discussed in chapter three. This is significant, because these are two Latin women corresponding on behalf of two different factions in the Levant. This may well have been the main reason that they were corresponding, whether of their own choice or pressured into doing so by

³⁰⁶ Odo summarised the Franks' attitudes toward the Byzantines: 'they were judged not to be Christians, and the Franks considered killing them a matter of no importance', see: Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, bk. III, p. 57.

³⁰⁷ Odo of Deuil, bk. III, p. 57.

the leaders of their respective groups. As John Parsons notes, medieval queens were well placed within the social hierarchy to, 'deal with others independently of institutions or offices'.³⁰⁸ It is possible that in order to ease tensions, the crusaders and Byzantines were using these women very intentionally. This is all the more likely as this event is one of very few occasions that Odo mentions the presence of Eleanor during the Second Crusade, so her involvement was clearly very meaningful. That said, it is difficult to quantify what effect her correspondence had. However, the influence that some women had in negotiations can be measured quantitatively.

Not only did women help ease political tensions, they also participated in significant negotiations over territory. William of Tyre states that the Byzantine emperor, Manuel I Komnenos, after hearing that Jocelin II count of Edessa had been captured by Nur ad-Din, offered to Jocelin's wife Beatrice, 'a fixed annual revenue sufficient to afford herself and her children an honourable livelihood always, if, in return, she would surrender into him control of the fortresses still in her possession'.³⁰⁹ Beatrice took the offer and William is able to name six fortresses that were handed over to the Byzantines but admits there were, 'possibly some others'.³¹⁰ This was clearly an expansive, and militarily valuable territory that was handed over and marked the demise of the crusader County of Edessa. Robert Nicholson does note that the importance of Baldwin III in these negotiations cannot be understated. It was in Baldwin's interest that a Byzantine ruler rather than the hostile Nur ad-Din controlled the area north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.³¹¹ However, Nicholson does admit that the emperor's proposal, 'was concluded with the consent of countess

³⁰⁸ J.C. Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in Carpenter and MacLean, *Power of the Weak*, p. 147.

³⁰⁹ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVII, p. 208.

³¹⁰ William of Tyre, bk. XVII, p. 209.

³¹¹ R.L. Nicholson, *Jocelyn III and the Fall of the Crusader States: 1134-1199*, Brill, Leiden, 1973, p. 23.

Beatrice'.³¹² Similarly, Eschiva, the countess of Tiberias, who as mentioned in chapter two defended the citadel of Tiberias against Saladin in 1187, also negotiated over territory though, with far more agency than Beatrice. The continuation of William of Tyre explains that Eschiva, 'assumed that her husband and her children had been lost [at the battle of Hattin]. She sent word to Saladin that she would surrender Tiberias if he would give her safe conduct to go to Tripoli'.³¹³ One Muslim source directly corroborates Eschiva's correspondence with Saladin, Ibn al-Athir. He recollects that, 'the chatelaine [Eschiva] sent requesting terms for herself, her children, her followers and her possessions. [Saladin] granted this and she left with everything'.³¹⁴ Beha ed-Din claims Saladin released as many as four thousand captives from Tiberias.³¹⁵ Whether such a high number were released or not is hard to determine however, the great number indicates that Beha was trying to highlight the gravity of the situation. This is clear evidence of a woman dealing directly with a Muslim ruler over very serious issues. However, both of these examples took place either during sieges or at times where conflict was imminent. It is likely that this influenced the speed of proceedings and the willingness of the men in the contingents of Beatrice and Eschiva to follow their decisions. That said, there are numerous examples of women taking part in negotiations after conflicts had culminated.

Women interceded with Muslim leaders in order to ransom their relatives after military actions. An example can be seen in Queen Sibylla, who, 'wrote to Saladin to say that he should abide by the agreements that he had made with her husband when he surrendered Ascalon to him,

³¹² Nicholson, p. 23.

³¹³ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 48, v. 44.

³¹⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, p. 324.

³¹⁵ Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin or What Befell Sultun Yusuf*, p. 116.

and that it was high time he released him. Saladin wrote back saying he would do so gladly'.³¹⁶ In this case there is a direct reference to a correspondence being exchanged rather than a one sided engagement. Another prominent example can be seen in Stephanie of Milly who according to Ibn al-Athir also bartered with Saladin after the fall of Jerusalem over prisoners. Ibn al-Athir states that she, 'interceded for a captive son of hers [Humphrey IV of Toron]. Saladin said to her, "if you surrender Kerak, I shall free him"'.³¹⁷ Unfortunately for Humphrey his mother could not secure the surrender of Kerak for his release. Ibn al-Athir went on to recount that Saladin did, 'release [Stephanie's] possessions and those who attended her'.³¹⁸

Women of lesser nobility also played some role in negotiations with Saladin. The *Eracles* recounts that after Saladin took Jerusalem in 1187, many wives and daughters of knights who had been captured in the battle of Hattin came to him. The author states: 'they explained that he had their husbands and fathers in prison and that they had lost their lands, and they called on him for the sake of God to have mercy on them and give them counsel and aid'.³¹⁹ This was a particularly successful plea as, '[the Muslims] freed all those who were in Saladin's custody. Then [Saladin] ordered that the ladies and maidens whose fathers and lords had been killed in the battle should be provided for generously from his goods, more to some and less to others according to who they were'.³²⁰ Evidently social rank played a massive part in this plea, and the author does specifically say that it was the family members of knights who came to Saladin. Undoubtedly, women from any lesser social rung could not have hoped to gain any compensation or to have secured the freedom of their male relatives. Yet, at the time of the *Eracles* composition in thirteenth-century

³¹⁶ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 77, v. 75.

³¹⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, p. 333.

³¹⁸ Ibn al-Athir, p. 333.

³¹⁹ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 64, v. 58.

³²⁰ Anonymous, p. 64, v. 58.

France, Saladin had become renowned as a chivalrous and honourable warrior.³²¹ It is possible the author may have included these details to exemplify Saladin's merciful qualities. If the story the *Eracles* recounts is a fabrication, then it is likely that it was Saladin's altruism that was intended as the striking part of the story for a contemporary medieval audience rather than the women seeking his council. This suggests that such an act was not necessarily that odd during the time of the *Eracles'* composition.

Contemporary Muslim descriptions of Saladin's interactions with crusader women corroborate that he was particularly kind and approachable when dealing with them. Beha ed-Din recounts an occasion during the siege of Acre in 1191 when he witnessed the approach of a Frankish woman whose baby had been abducted from within the besiegers' camp. He recalls her meeting with Saladin, 'she threw herself on her face upon the ground and began weeping and lamenting. When the Sultan heard the cause of her grief he was affected even to tears, and commanded the child to be brought'.³²² Beha used this anecdote (more than once)³²³ very tactically to highlight Saladin's compassionate qualities. Despite his political agenda, Beha's account does illustrate the ability of crusading women of a variety of social classes to interact with Muslims in negotiations. Yet it is possible that Saladin was unique in his interaction with crusader women as there are relatively few accounts of other Muslim leaders doing the same.

Another element of Saladin's character that set him apart from his contemporaries was that he struck up genuine friendships with the crusader women he communicated with. According

³²¹ M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 16.

³²² Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin or What Befell Sultun Yusuf*, p. 244.

³²³ See also, Beha Ed-Din, p. 41.

to Ibn al-Athir, following Saladin's capture of Bourzey castle in 1188, he took the lord of Bourzey along with his wife and children and released them upon approaching Antioch.³²⁴ Ibn al-Athir explains Saladin's clemency: 'the wife of the lord of [Bourzey] was the sister-in-law of Bohemond [III], lord of Antioch. She was in correspondence with Saladin and exchanged gifts with him. She used to inform him of many significant matters. He freed these people for her sake'.³²⁵ This shows that the lady of Bourzey was in such close correspondence with Saladin over a significant period of time, that the two were friends. Clearly this signifies the regular involvement of a woman in negotiations and correspondence rather than a one-off event due to circumstance. However, it does also suggest that despite the close correspondence of the lady of Bourzey with Saladin, she had no ability to quell his attack on her castle, or indeed his advance into wider crusader territory. Yet, female negotiation, with Muslims in particular, was not always well received by the Levantine Frankish population.

This is evident in William of Tyre's chronicle. He notes that after the death of Bohemond II of Antioch (d.1130) his wife, Alice of Antioch, decided to enter into negotiations with the Muslim leader Zengi in order to secure her position as the leader of the county. William recounts, 'by one of her own servants she sent to [Zengi] a present of a snow-white palfrey shot with silver'.³²⁶ Alice's plan did not come to fruition as the servant was captured by Baldwin II of Jerusalem and killed. William is particularly scathing of Alice's behaviour, he described her intentions as a, 'wicked plan',³²⁷ and the, 'bold insolence of a foolish woman'.³²⁸ It is hard to ascertain why William was so vitriolic toward Alice. Bohemond and Alice had one child, a daughter, and William states

³²⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, pp. 351-352.

³²⁵ Ibn al-Athir, p. 352.

³²⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XIII, p. 44.

³²⁷ William of Tyre, bk. XIII, p. 44.

³²⁸ William of Tyre, bk. XIII, p. 45.

that, 'Alice was determined to disinherit her daughter'.³²⁹ Evidently the idea of a woman inheriting the principality was not the point that angered William. It is possible that he was incensed because Alice had dared to negotiate independently with a Muslim rather than a Christian leader. James Illston did note that there are no contemporary Muslim records of this peace treaty being offered.³³⁰ If this event was a fabrication or mistake on William's part, it is a clear insight into the negative perspectives he, as a late twelfth-century Levantine Frankish writer, had of female negotiations with Muslims. Even if William's attitudes reflected the contemporary feelings of the Frankish-Levantine population, many crusaders used women in their negotiations with Muslim and Byzantine leaders.

Women were frequently involved more passively in diplomatic negotiations, particularly through marriage. Odo de Deuil describes women being used as a tool in negotiations between the Byzantines and the crusaders. He states that in exchange for guides and for Byzantine markets to be opened to the crusaders, Manuel I Komnenos 'demanded two things: a kinswoman of the king's, who accompanied the queen, as wife for one of his nephews, and the homage of the barons for himself'.³³¹ The use of a diplomatic marriage in this case would have helped ease tensions, as the Byzantines and pilgrims of the Second Crusade were often at odds, as explained earlier. Similarly, Jean de Joinville states that in 1254, 'envoys came to [Louis IX] from a great lord from distant Greece, who styled himself the Grand Comnenus, lord of Trebizond'.³³² Trebizond was a Byzantine state that was founded after the fall of Constantinople in 1204.³³³ According to Jean these envoys, 'asked the king to send their lord a young woman from his household so that

³²⁹ William of Tyre, bk. XIII, p. 44.

³³⁰ Illston, 'An Entirely Masculine Activity?', p. 67.

³³¹ Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, bk. IV, p. 77.

³³² Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 293, v. 591.

³³³ C. Smith, 'Notes', in Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 377, n. 5.

he might marry her'.³³⁴ The envoys were asking for a woman to be used to seal a diplomatic alliance between Louis and the empire of Trebizond. The significance of such familial connections was clearly very strong as Louis's answer shows. Jean states that Louis had no suitable women with him but instead, 'suggested they might go to the emperor at Constantinople, the king's cousin, and ask him to provide them with a wife for their lord who would be of both the emperor's and the king's line'.³³⁵ It is possible however, that Louis was just diplomatically evading sending any of his kinswomen to the empire of Trebizond, while politely expressing his support for Trebizond's rival, the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Contemporary Latin attitudes to political marriages between Christian women and Muslim men were often much more negative than toward marriages between Latins and Greek Orthodox Byzantines.

Diplomatic marriages between the crusaders and Muslims were negotiated, though far more infrequently. This was often because members of neither faction would tolerate converting to the opposing religion in order to marry for diplomacy. An example of a proposed marriage between a Latin woman and a Muslim noble for diplomatic reasons can be seen when Richard I, seeking a peace agreement, offered Saladin's brother Al Adil, 'his sister- the one who had been queen of Sicily – to be his wife', provided that Al Adil converted to Christianity.³³⁶ However, as Ibn al-Athir notes, 'when this became public knowledge, the priests, bishops and monks assembled before the king of England's sister and expressed their disapproval, so she refused to comply'.³³⁷ Ibn al-Athir however, makes no mention of Al Adil being asked to convert to Christianity and indicates that both Al Adil and Saladin consented to peace under the terms proposed by Richard. It

³³⁴ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 293, v. 592.

³³⁵ Jean de Joinville, p. 293, v. 592.

³³⁶ See: Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 120, v. 142.

³³⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh. Part 2*, p. 392.

is possible that both Saladin and Al Adil were convinced that the proposal would never come to fruition and merely pretended to consider it seriously. Yet, Yehoshua Frenkel has described how these events were repeatedly described in numerous later works of Islamic literature, and that this could indicate that numerous Muslims were, 'willing to accept the option of inter-communal marriage as a valid strategy to end hostilities'.³³⁸ Similarly, Christian authors such as Pierre Dubois, would argue in the early fourteenth century that as a means of recapturing the Holy Land, Christian women should be married off to Muslims with the intention of converting them to Christianity.³³⁹ However, this offers little insight into how the twelfth-century Frankish Levantine population viewed such arrangements.

Women interacted with Byzantine and Muslim leaders in a variety of military and peaceful situations and for a plethora of reasons. It is hard to gauge how the majority of respective factions felt about these arrangements as, frequently, the circumstances forced each faction to resort to unconventional methods of diplomacy. This was often because the highest-ranking male leader of a crusading group was incapacitated or dead, and their wife had to intercede in his stead. In all the examples above, there were a number of men present in the crusader factions that were being represented by women. Undoubtedly some of these men would have been knights or men of noble status. So it is clear that the duties of representing the interests of groups of crusaders did not automatically fall onto the shoulders of the next man in the social hierarchy when one was toppled. It is significant that women frequently assumed a position of leadership in these scenarios. Irrespective of this, women often acted of their own accord and for their own reasons when they approached members of non-Latin factions in the Levant. This clearly shows a great

³³⁸ Y. Frenkel, 'Muslim Responses to the Frankish Dominion in the Near East, 1098-1291', in C. Kostic (ed.), *The Crusades and the Near East*, London, Routledge, 2011, p. 31

³³⁹ See: Pierre Dubois, *The Recovery of the Holy Land*, trans. W.I. Brandt, New York, Columbia University Press, 1956.

deal of female licence to control the course of their lives as well as the lives of their relatives and dependants. It is also significant that the bulk of instances where women approached a Muslim leader, they approached Saladin. This further highlights the dramatic effects that the events in the lead up to the Third Crusade had on gender role reversal in the Frankish Levant. Yet, this may be due to the larger body of extant evidence surrounding Saladin's reign compared to other Muslim leaders.

Women and Inter-Crusader Relations

There are suggestions that the crusaders, to an extent, used women to negotiate with Muslim and Byzantine powers because of circumstances rather than because they had considerable faith in women's capabilities as negotiators. However, this may have been a reflection of a Frankish Levantine perception that in leading negotiations with non-Latin entities, the leader was in some sense representing the Latin Christian faith. It is possible that under ideal circumstances, with an appropriately ranked male leader present, women were not considered optimum candidates to represent Latin Christianity. It may have been the case that Levantine Franks felt that women were more appropriate mediators between crusader factions than between Latin and non-Latin authorities. This seems plausible as women were key players in inter-crusader negotiations and frequently took centre stage in political correspondence. Not only that, but the women who helped negotiations between Latin powers in the Levant often did so at the express request of male leaders or as their representatives, rather than acting on their own inclination, as was more common with female negotiations with Muslim leaders.

There were key women who played a part as intermediaries on behalf of crusade leaders in the Levant. During the Seventh Crusade, Jean de Joinville stated that, 'while we were staying in Cyprus the empress of Constantinople sent word to me that she had come to Paphos, and that Erart of Brienne and I should go and fetch her'.³⁴⁰ The empress that Jean describes was Marie of Brienne, the wife of the Latin emperor Baldwin II.³⁴¹ Jean goes on to state that, 'the empress had come to ask for aid from the king for her husband, who had stayed in Constantinople... she took away a hundred or more duplicate letters... these letters bound us on oath to go to Constantinople should the king or legate wish to send 300 knights'.³⁴² Though ultimately unsuccessful in her bid to secure military aid for her husband, this event highlights a very significant diplomatic exchange between Louis IX and Baldwin II through Marie as the broker.

There are suggestions that Eleanor of Aquitaine similarly played a role as intermediary between Louis VII and Raymond of Poitiers, prince of Antioch. Contemporaries described Eleanor as being particularly astute. William of Tyre suggests that Raymond had considered Eleanor, his niece, to be a key player in the negotiations he would have with the French contingent of the Second Crusade. William states that Raymond believed the crusade could help, 'to enlarge the principality of Antioch'.³⁴³ In currying favour with Louis, Raymond had sent him many gifts, but also, 'counted greatly on the interest of the queen with the lord king, for she had been his inseparable companion'.³⁴⁴ Clearly Eleanor's proximity to Louis was a major factor in Raymond's interest in using her to Antioch's advantage. But Eleanor's intellect cannot be ruled out as a factor in Raymond's thinking, as he had briefly known her in France and had likely heard of her exploits long

³⁴⁰ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 179, v. 137.

³⁴¹ Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 366, n. 14.

³⁴² Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, pp. 179-180, v. 139.

³⁴³ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVI, p. 179.

³⁴⁴ William of Tyre, bk. XVI, p. 179.

since he left Europe. Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland state categorically that, 'Raymond's intrigues with his niece were wholly political'.³⁴⁵ However, understanding Eleanor's exact role in the politics that took place in Antioch is difficult to fathom. This is because her visit there was scandalised by many contemporaries due to allegations that she had an illicit affair with Raymond, as outlined in chapter three. This is hardly an isolated instance where a woman's involvement in the politics of the crusades was shrouded in doubt and rumour.

William of Tyre's chronicle is one such document that highlights women's involvement in inter-crusader politics in a very negative manner. However, this may have had more to do with personal disagreements than gender prejudices. William states that in 1182 Raymond III of Tripoli made a journey to visit both his wife's lands in Tiberias as well as King Baldwin IV in Jerusalem. William recounts that Baldwin was tricked into believing Raymond was going to do him some harm so he barred Raymond from entering the kingdom. According to William, among those who influenced Baldwin's course of action were, 'his mother [Agnes de Courtenay], a most grasping woman, utterly detestable to God'.³⁴⁶ It is evident by his terminology that William had a severe distaste for Agnes, most likely because of her influence on church appointments, which will be explained in due course. William was close to Baldwin IV and had tutored him since Baldwin's childhood. It is possible that William included Agnes in this narrative to alleviate some of Baldwin's culpability in causing the souring of relations between himself and Raymond. If Agnes was involved in this episode she was indirectly influencing diplomacy through her son. This is a case where a women became involved in negotiations without any indication of the men involved expressly asking them to or their counsel being legally necessary. This could be interpreted as being sound

³⁴⁵ A. Strickland and E. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 248.

³⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XXII, p. 460.

evidence for the extreme power that Agnes had over negotiations. It is possible that this also influenced William's sour attitude. However, there are examples of women becoming involved in negotiations because they were legally obliged to be.

Jean de Joinville describes an event in which Louis IX negotiated with the mother of Prince Bohemond VI of Antioch, Luciana di Segni, over her regency and property. Bohemond had come to Louis along with his mother, to ask the two to come to an agreement whereby he would be put in full control of Antioch along with the funds and men necessary to build up the strength of the principality. Joinville states that Louis, 'used all his powers of persuasion with the prince's mother so that she would provide as much as the king could extract from her'.³⁴⁷ The negotiations appear to have gone in Bohemond's favour, as Joinville remarks that, 'as soon as the prince left the king he went to Antioch, where he fulfilled his responsibilities very well'.³⁴⁸ It is possible Joinville was insinuating that the principality of Antioch was performing poorly under the leadership of a woman. However, this narrative shows that Bohemond could in no way circumvent Luciana's authority as he was, 'no more than sixteen years old',³⁴⁹ and his mother had been acting as regent in his minority. As such, Luciana had to be at the forefront of any negotiation over the future leadership of the principality. A similar situation arose when Baldwin III tried to overthrow his mother, queen Melisende. William of Tyre describes how in 1151, 'Baldwin went to his mother and demanded that she at once divide the kingdom with him... after much deliberation on both sides, the inheritance was finally divided... Jerusalem and Nablus, also with the cities pertaining to them, were left to the queen'.³⁵⁰ As James Illston noted, despite the ensuing conflict between the two

³⁴⁷ Jean de Joinville, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 276, v. 524.

³⁴⁸ Jean de Joinville, p. 276, v. 524.

³⁴⁹ Jean de Joinville, p. 275, v. 522.

³⁵⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVII, p. 205.

parties, Melisende must have been a potent negotiator as she 'was able to emerge just a few years later in a position of relative power and freedom in Baldwin's government'.³⁵¹ These two examples concerned the possession of cities or principalities; yet some women were involved in negotiations over the funding of whole crusade movements.

This is clear by the *Eracles'* account of Richard I's negotiations with his sister Joan over funding his expedition in the Third Crusade. The author writes that, 'King Richard, who was very devious and greedy, never stopped begging his sister to sell her dower and go with him on pilgrimage'.³⁵² In exchange Richard offered to reimburse her upon his return to England and to find her a suitable husband, to which Joan agreed. However, the *Eracles* reveals, 'the king was delighted that his sister had agreed to sell her dower, for he had already come to an agreement with King Tancred over its sale'.³⁵³ The author's insinuation being that Richard went over Joan's head and merely consulted her as a formality. However, given the author's previous vitriolic description of Richard, it is probable that he was just writing these scandalous details to deprecate Richard further. Joan may not have had an integral part in this funding negotiation, but evidently her participation in the dialogue was considered to be necessary for the transaction to be legitimate.³⁵⁴ This does show that women were considered to have a rightful place in politics, particularly when it concerned their own property. However, this did not necessarily apply to their person, as women were often used in marriage alliances between crusaders.

³⁵¹ Illston, 'An Entirely Masculine Activity?', p. 67.

³⁵² Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 97, v. 107.

³⁵³ Anonymous, p. 97, v. 107.

³⁵⁴ Colette Bowie has said that, 'queens of Norman Sicily all received considerable dowers but in general did not play an important role in government, and in this regard [Joan] was unexceptional', see: C. Bowie, 'To Have and Have Not: The Dower of Joanna Plantagenet, Queen of Sicily (1177-1189)', in E. Woodacre (ed.), *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013, p. 35.

Women were occasionally used to form marriage-alliances between crusaders in a similar manner to how they were married off to non-Latins. The practice of arranged marriages was by no means isolated to the Frankish Levant, but was a key means of solidifying relations amongst the Latin Levantine barony as well as with nobles from Europe. William of Tyre was aghast at the motives of Baldwin IV in marrying his sister, Sibylla, to Guy de Lusignan, '[as the king] might have found in the kingdom nobles of far greater importance, wisdom, and even wealth, both foreigners and natives, an alliance with any one of whom would have been of much greater advantage to the kingdom'.³⁵⁵ In this remark, William admits that women were used to form alliances that would be most advantageous to their male relatives. It is hard to determine from William's statements whether Sibylla had much, if any, say in who she married.

The use of women as a tool in marriage alliances is also evident in the *Eracles*. The author states that after Guy de Lusignan captured Cyprus he needed Latin recruits to help him maintain his new lands. In securing the loyalty of many of the knights and barons recently dispossessed by Saladin, among other things, Guy, 'had them marry women on their arrival as befitted their station, and he provided for them out of his wealth so that those that married them would be well satisfied'.³⁵⁶ Numerous historians neglect to mention the involvement of these women in the Frankish settlement of Cyprus. George Hill's new *History of Cyprus*, for example, goes into great detail concerning the social standing of the individuals who settled Cyprus and the fiefs and money they received from Guy, but he makes no mention of the women betrothed to them.³⁵⁷ Similarly, many of Guy's recruits came from Armenia and yet, Jacob Ghazarian, who focused on Armenian-

³⁵⁵ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XXII, p. 446.

³⁵⁶ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 114, v. 136.

³⁵⁷ G. Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 31-41.

Latin integration in a recent study, neglects to discuss the women who helped cement the loyalties of Guy's recruits.³⁵⁸ The reasoning for why so few historians mention this instance of female involvement is perplexing. One of the few who does touch on women's influences in the Frankish control of Cyprus is Bernard Hamilton. He describes how Alice of Champagne (d.1246) worked to maintain the uneasy coexistence between the Greek residents and Frankish nobles,³⁵⁹ yet this took place long after the initial settlement.

It is likely that Guy believed that paying recruits or giving them fiefs would not be sufficient to gain their loyalties, rather he wanted them to have families and settle down in his new kingdom. Similarities may be drawn between the Frankish settlement of Cyprus, which may be regarded as a colonial settlement, and other early colonial settlements such as that of New Zealand. As Charlotte Macdonald notes, single women were sought after in colonial New Zealand and given subsidised passage due to the shortage of European women in the country.³⁶⁰ The thinking behind this venture was, partly, that much of the European male population in New Zealand would settle down and start a family, thus becoming more pacified and making the country more orderly. Numerous historians have commented on the influences of the family construct in the early history of New Zealand, so it stands to reason that the same level of attention should be paid to the involvement of women, passive or otherwise, in the Latin settlement of Cyprus.

Many historians have underappreciated the influences of women in inter-crusader negotiations. A number of women took central stage in negotiations between crusaders and the

³⁵⁸ J.G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades: The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins, 1080-1393*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 2000, p. 143.

³⁵⁹ Hamilton, *The Crusading World*, p. 230.

³⁶⁰ C. Macdonald, *A Woman of Good Character: Single Women as Immigrant Settlers in Nineteenth Century New Zealand*, Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1990, p. iii.

effects of their work had large ramifications. The social standing of these women appears to almost exclusively have been from among the highest social circles. Relatively few female members of the lesser nobility, let alone commoners, are visible in discussions of negotiations within narrative sources in particular. The case of Guy's take over of Cyprus is one of the few exceptions, though there is evidently room for far more scholarly work on this area. It is clear that high social standing was a much more relevant quality for women to take part in active negotiations than it was for men. It appears that women were to a large extent as active in negotiations in the Levant as they were in contemporary Europe. What the Near East offered was a new outlet for women to act in politics. However, female involvement in the politics of the crusades had much wider religious implications than would have occurred in their dealings in European politics. Members of religious circles in the Levant must have been struck by the appearance of women in negotiations that had extensive consequences for Christendom.

Women and Religious Decision Making

It is possible that through crusading, women were able to exert greater influence over the decisions of the church and religious orders in the Levant. Within western European medieval society women were frequently barred from many aspects of religious life. As outlined in the historiographical chapter, one of the few outlets for female religious expression was in taking the cowl. However, only privileged or noble women and families could afford this. Pilgrimage was the one option open to women of all classes, and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem was the most renowned. It is possible that through the shared experience of the hardships of crusading, many men who had gone on crusade or settled in the Levant were respectful of women who had made the same journey. Having proven their religious devotion these women may have had greater sway over

religious orders. Women had also, as stated above, represented various crusading forces in negotiations with Muslim and Byzantine delegates. Contemporaries may have, to some extent, perceived female negotiators as having represented not only the crusaders but also the wider Latin faith. This rise in the standing of women within the Christian church coincides with a general rise in reverence for female saintly figures throughout Christendom.

Caroline Bynum is a notable exponent of the rise of female figures in medieval Christian thought. She remarked that, 'in the period of the twelfth to the fifteenth century, in contrast to the early Middle Ages, positive female figures and feminine metaphors took a significant place in spirituality alongside both positive male figures and misogynist images of women'.³⁶¹ This is indicated by the rise in spiritual devotion to both the Virgin Mary and for female saints across all of Christendom. Matthew Hammond notes numerous striking examples of the extent of this phenomenon in Scotland. He stated that, 'at least fifteen monasteries founded between 1124 and 1250 (excluding Galloway and Argyll) seem to have been dedicated exclusively to the Virgin Mary... it is clear that at least 80% of religious houses founded in Scotland at this time were associated with Mary in their dedications'.³⁶² The popularity of the Virgin Mary in this period is also evident in literature. In the crusading *Chanson de Geste of Aiol*, the protagonist exclaims at one point: ' "Lady St. Mary!... help me. From now on, I want to be your knight"'.³⁶³ The protagonist echoes similar phrases throughout the story. Clearly, both clergymen and laypeople had begun to find significant spiritual comfort in the Virgin Mary. As Miri Rubin put it: 'monasteries were the centres of wealth

³⁶¹ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 152.

³⁶² M.H. Hammond, 'Royal and Aristocratic Attitudes to Saints and the Virgin Mary in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Scotland', in S. Boardman (ed.), and E. Williamson (ed.), *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland*, Woodbridge, the Boydell Press, 2010, p. 73.

³⁶³ *Aiol*, p, 74, vv. 2948-2949; another example can be seen when he prayed 'to the lord God of majesty, "Lady St. Mary, help me now..."', see: *Aiol*, p, 21, vv. 809- 810.

and taste; they set trends in devotion for clergy, the religious and for lay people. This is especially true in all that concerns Mary...'.³⁶⁴

'There was no clear association of ordinary women and men with saints of their own sex'.³⁶⁵ Men found that they had a spiritual connection with the Virgin Mary and canonised women.³⁶⁶ Speaking with regard to religious texts, Bynum's explanation for the male fascination with female spiritual figures in the twelfth-century was that they, 'applied female images to themselves to express world denial, and the world they renounced was predominantly the world of wealth and power'.³⁶⁷ Nicholson adds another dimension to the possible reasons for male interest in religious women. She notes specifically that the Knights Templar held Saint Euphemia in particular esteem. Nicholson stated that it is paradoxical that the Templars did not associate with a more militaristic saint like Saint George.³⁶⁸ She explains that, 'in an order that did not officially admit women (although it had female associate members) and in which all men were celibate, devotion to female saints gave the brothers an outlet for their natural sexual drive'.³⁶⁹

It is possible that there were other elements that influenced men's appreciation for female religious figures other than those put forward by Bynum and Nicholson. The crusades incorporated huge numbers of women, and given the highly religious nature of crusading, this would have been seen as highly devotional undertaking. It is not inconceivable that the experience of seeing so many women working for this Christian movement under such dangerous and important

³⁶⁴ M. Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary*, London, Allen Lane, 2009, p. 121.

³⁶⁵ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 153.

³⁶⁶ Ironically, men were considered to be the sex that was associated with spirituality, despite society's fascination with spiritual women, see: Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 71.

³⁶⁷ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 175.

³⁶⁸ H.J. Nicholson, 'The Head of St. Euphemia: Templar Devotion to Female Saints', in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 110.

³⁶⁹ Nicholson, p. 115.

circumstances had an impact on crusaders and men in the Frankish Levant. Seeing the achievements of Christian women may have helped propel the rise in reverence for female saints. Alternatively the rise in Christendom's fascination with female religious figures may have coincided with the crusades through happenstance. That said, Miri Rubin does raise the idea that the appearance of the cult of the Virgin Mary began around the year 1000, nearly one hundred years before the crusades.³⁷⁰ If this is the case, then the rise in awareness of religious women may have influenced contemporaries to allow women greater freedoms in church and religious orders' dealings. Regardless of the reasoning for the phenomenon's occurrence it appears that during this period, women began to take on roles within religious military orders that were in no way subservient to male members of the same station.

Alan Forey stated that despite the misogynistic beliefs espoused by many religious military orders, 'bonds of varying kinds were in fact established between women and military orders during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries'.³⁷¹ Forey even said that, 'the Templar rule itself indicates that *sorores* had been admitted before 1129'.³⁷² This shows that women were accepted members of this militaristic fraternity at an early stage in its inception (the Templars were established in 1120). Anthony Luttrell and Helen Nicholson have asserted that in no way did the Hospitallers create, 'a separate female "branch" or "parallel institution"... except in the sense that the priest-brethern, knights or sergeants each formed a separate branch'.³⁷³ Rather, women were incorporated into the Hospitaller fraternity as fellow members, which shows a great deal of respect on the part of the

³⁷⁰ Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 121-157, see also: J. Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996.

³⁷¹ A. Forey, 'Women and the Military Orders in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in A. Luttrell (ed.), and H.J. Nicholson (ed.), *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006, p. 43.

³⁷² Forey, p. 45.

³⁷³ A. Luttrell, and H.J. Nicholson, 'Introduction: A Survey of Hospitaller women in the Middle Ages', in Luttrell and Nicholson, *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1-2.

male members. However, Luttrell and Nicholson note that toward the end of the twelfth-century, 'there was in general a growing trend for the physical separation of male and female religious'.³⁷⁴ This is made evident when the Hospitallers moved their headquarters to Acre after the fall of Jerusalem in 1187. Luttrell and Nicholson state that in this new location, 'by 1219 there was already somewhere in the new capital a separate, "house of the Hospital in which live sisters of the Hospital"''.³⁷⁵ It is clear that religious women were being given separate jobs to male religious around this time, as Oliver of Paderborn's account verifies. He states that after a raid in 1217, Christian forces carried off many Muslim children and the bishop of Acre, James de Vitry, 'apportioned them among religious women',³⁷⁶ with the aim that they would be converted. It is possible that this desire to separate female members from associating with the male members is linked to the phenomenon outlined in previous chapters, in which there may have been a steep rise in misogynistic attitudes within the Frankish Levant in the early thirteenth-century. Though Myra Bom is determined that this separation of the sexes, 'did not lead to a decline in the number or status of female Hospitallers',³⁷⁷ the decision could have been an attempt to display a more conservative outlook. However, during the twelfth-century women clearly took on positions of some gravity within religious military orders, and this may reflect a great deal of reverence for the female voice within the Latin church. The impact that women had on church appointments in this period adds weight to this theory.

³⁷⁴ Luttrell, and Nicholson, p. 7, See also: J. Sarnowsky, 'Gender-Aspekte in der Geschichte der geistlichen Ritterorden', in R. Hering (ed.), *Levendige Sozialgeschichte, Gedenkschrift für Peter Borowsky*, Wiesbaden, Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003, pp. 168- 188.

³⁷⁵ Luttrell, and Nicholson, p. 8.

³⁷⁶ Oliver of Paderborn, 'Oliver of Paderborn: The Capture of Damietta, ca. 1217-1222', in J. Bird (ed.), E. Peters (ed.) and J.M. Powell (ed.), *Crusade and Christendom: Annotated Documents in Translation from Innocent III to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, p. 163.

³⁷⁷ M.M. Bom, *Women in the Military Orders of the Crusades*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 93.

There are numerous examples of women influencing the election of church officials in the Latin East. William of Tyre is a particularly good source for these occurrences. He states that after the death of the patriarch of Jerusalem in 1145, a group was assembled to elect a new patriarch. Among the electors was, 'the king and his mother'.³⁷⁸ The king he refers to was Baldwin III and the mother was Queen Melisende. Melisende must have had some significant impact on the decision-making as Ralph, the royal chancellor, was 'strongly supported' by her and he was made patriarch.³⁷⁹ The involvement of women is also clear in the ascension of Amalrich of Nesle in 1158 to the patriarchate of Jerusalem. William of Tyre states that after the death of Fulcher the patriarch, 'through the intervention of a sister of Queen Melisend and Sibylla, countess of Flanders, the king's sister, the choice was irregularly made, and Amalrich, prior of the church of the Sepulchre of the Lord was elected'.³⁸⁰ William does not explicitly state which sister of Baldwin III pushed for Amalrich to be made patriarch. He does go on to say that the election caused some controversy among the bishops, so it is possible that William was trying to protect the reputation of whoever influenced the election. Regardless of his silence on the person's name, their gender is clear and the significance of their influence is evident.

This set a precedent, which was repeated during the reign of Baldwin IV of Jerusalem. In 1180, Baldwin allowed his mother Agnes de Courtenay to have great influence on who the next patriarch of Jerusalem would be. The *Eracles* states that following a meeting between William of Tyre and the canons in charge of electing the next patriarch, '[William] left them and they went to their chapter meeting. The king's mother had already entreated them to elect Eraclius... some of

³⁷⁸ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XVI, p. 162.

³⁷⁹ William of Tyre, bk. XVI, p. 162.

³⁸⁰ William of Tyre, bk. XVIII, p. 271.

them there she had corrupted'.³⁸¹ The *Eracles* goes on to explain Agnes' reasoning for choosing Eraclius: 'Agnes, the mother of the Leper King, loved [Eraclius] excessively, and because of the great love she had for him she made him archdeacon of Jerusalem, then archbishop of Caesarea and finally... patriarch'.³⁸² The *Eracles* puts a significantly negative spin on Agnes' involvement. However, the author is not being negative because a woman had such influence but rather because the *Eracles* is a continuation of William of Tyre's work. According to the *Eracles* itself, William was the only other contender for the patriarchate.³⁸³ As such the author was just as bitter about the choice as William himself was.³⁸⁴ This explains William's spiteful description of Agnes when describing her influence in the previously examined strife between Baldwin and Raymond III of Tripoli. The *Eracles* author's mild reaction to a woman influencing the ascent of Amalrich to patriarch is also an indicator that he was not negative about a woman influencing church decisions. That said, it is also possible that the author was more focused on deprecating Amalrich, as the author claims that Amalrich, a member of the clergy, had been having sexual liaisons with a married woman.³⁸⁵ He may have found this more distasteful than the idea of a woman influencing church decisions and so did not dwell on the latter.

It appears there was some decline in women's involvement in Latin church appointments and decisions in the Levant after the 1180s. This fits with this thesis' argument that female freedoms within the Frankish Levant followed a "bell curve" trend and began to decline around the beginning of the thirteenth-century. Similarly, women's position in religious military orders also

³⁸¹ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 43, v. 37.

³⁸² Anonymous, p. 43, v. 38.

³⁸³ Anonymous, p. 42, v. 37.

³⁸⁴ See: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. XXII, p. 460.

³⁸⁵ Anonymous, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, pp. 43-44, v. 38.

began to decline in status or at least became highly differentiated from the male membership around the same period. The cult of the Virgin Mary continued to be extremely popular well after this period however, so it would appear that the female presence in crusades was not intrinsically linked to the phenomenon, although the instigation of Christendom's obsession with female religious figures may still have been inflamed by the initial involvement of women in crusading.

It is significant that there is also a distinct dearth of female involvement in the wider political negotiations after the onset of the thirteenth-century. Oliver of Paderborn, the most salient contemporary chronicler to have witnessed the Fifth Crusade, seldom mentions women or their involvement in negotiations.³⁸⁶ The lack of women negotiators in his account is stark when compared to the numerous negotiations that involved women around the fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187. Individuals such as Margaret of Provence were counselled in negotiations with Egyptian powers during Louis IX's ransom in 1250, as seen in chapter three. However, Margaret's case appears to be anomalous for the thirteenth-century.

Given the high numbers of women involved in negotiations with non-Latin delegates around the mid to late twelfth-century, it would appear that social unrest and warfare were important factors in giving women the opportunity to shift gender roles and seize the reins of negotiations. The likelihood of this is compounded by the appearance of a plethora of women from the lesser nobility in talks with non-Latin leaders around the same period. One could interpret this

³⁸⁶ See the following for an account of the Fifth Crusade, note women feature very infrequently: Oliver of Paderborn, *Crusade and Christendom*, pp. 158-224.

as evidence that Frankish Levantine men did not approve of women participating in negotiations in peaceful circumstances. Yet, many crusaders saw no problem in allowing women to participate in inter-crusader talks, frequently as intermediaries representing their absent husband or son who was in their minority. There is not an overwhelming body of evidence that indicates women had significantly greater opportunities to lead negotiations within the Levant, compared to their contemporaries within western Europe. Regardless of this, the analysis within this chapter of female leadership in negotiations has added weight to the likelihood of a decline in wider female freedoms within the Frankish Levant during the thirteenth-century.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to uncover the shifts in the Frankish Levantine perceptions of women who participated in crusade movements between 1147 and 1254. It has argued that during the twelfth-century the people of the crusader states become increasingly tolerant of women who broke out of what would have been considered their normal gender roles. This tolerance for deviation from the norm reached its peak following the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. There is little indication that this shift in societal attitudes within the Latin States was based on any notions of gender-equality; rather it was due to the gravity of the religious, geo-political, and military circumstances of the time. Despite there being no tangible collective desire to emancipate women from the constraints that medieval society imposed, there is little reason to suspect that women would not have used this situation to their advantage. This has been explored in three areas: women's increased ability to take part in combat, the increased authority of female leadership, and the greater ability of women to take part in the dialogue between the various powers of the Levant. All of these areas of investigation were set within the context of the culture and perceptions of gender in the Frankish Levant, something which modern historiography has to a large extent failed to take account of. Not only has this thesis avoided the lure of focusing too intently on specific individuals as many other historians continually do, but it has also applied its line on inquiry to a broad spectrum of crusading history rather than on an individual crusade. These factors have contributed to making this thesis unique in its aim within the historiography on women-crusaders. The topic of women and crusade warfare was one area that this thesis engaged with, which it may be argued has already received a disproportionate level of scrutiny from scholars. However, this thesis' inquiry into this topic yielded original results.

The crusades were first and foremost a martial enterprise. From their inception the crusader states were consistently undermanned. This formed the perfect opportunity for women to help out the crusade movement in, perhaps, the most striking way, through fighting. Scholarship on women's roles during crusade warfare has been over-researched in modern crusade historiography. However, this thesis has helped address some of the holes within that scholarship, most notably, by plotting a timeline of the frequency with which women are noted as having taking part in crusade warfare. References to their involvement in the latter rose significantly following 1187. This thesis has shown that this was no coincidence, but rather it is evidence that for a brief period the people of the Frankish Levant saw women as necessary to the military defence of their states. This relaxation of martial gender roles was coupled with other freedoms within society. The most noticeable of which was women's increased sexual freedom. It is likely that women experienced other freedoms in this period, as the perceived need for strict adherence to gender roles relaxed. However, these are obscured within the source material, as contemporary authors may not have found the experiences of women particularly interesting or pertinent to their narratives. Yet, modern scholarship can be quick to discount the accounts of Islamic authors who attest to a culture of relaxed gender roles within the Frankish Levant. There is some legitimacy for doing so, yet a reluctance to scrutinise Muslim sources seriously can only stunt further development of studies of women and crusading.

During the thirteenth-century, references to women warriors within crusade narratives began to decline. It is possible that this is a reflection of the increased number of male combatants within crusader armies of the 1200s. This meant that there was no longer a need for women to take on the role of warrior. It is also possible that the perceived desperation of the situation in the

Levant eased, and this allowed stricter gender roles to be re-imposed. Narratives of the period also describe the crusader states as a particularly lascivious place with less frequency in this period. Unfortunately, the reasons for the decline in women's freedoms in the thirteenth-century are just as ambiguous as the wider implications of the rise of their freedoms in the late twelfth. Despite the lack of contemporary commentary on the latter, women who were in power received a marked level of interest from contemporaries during the twelfth-century.

I have demonstrated that there is a case to be made for the argument that there was a greater acceptance of female leadership within the Levant during the 1100s. The empowered women that pervaded Levantine society may well have had a great effect on visiting queens and noble women, though this cannot be proven conclusively. Yet, during the final quarter of the twelfth-century misogynistic perceptions began to rise sharply amongst the Frankish Levantine populous. The reasoning for this sudden change can only be speculated upon, however, it can be shown that perceptions of female leadership within the Levant in the thirteenth-century were conclusively at odds with those of their contemporaries in Europe. This thesis did not have the capacity to probe this divergence further, but there is clearly room for greater historical inquiry into this difference. If modern academia shifted its focus from specific queens of the Latin States and instead analysed the culture of Frankish Levantine queenship and the local attitudes to that culture, such a line of inquiry would be beneficial not only to studies of gender perceptions, but also to understanding the perceptions of a colonial society in decline.

The thesis determined that women were active negotiators between crusader factions. In common with women's heightened ability to take part in battle, their ability to participate in negotiations, particularly with Muslim delegates, was almost entirely due to social upheaval, rather

than a conscious decision among the people of the Frankish Levant to be represented by women. However, by probing this topic, under-examined areas such as the use of women in the Frankish settlement of Cyprus came to greater light.³⁸⁷ Scholarship on early colonial New Zealand and America has already observed similar phenomena; yet, the opportunities to study the use of women in settling colonies in a crusade context are still awaiting serious exploration. Though the agency women had in the settling of Cyprus is debatable, women did intentionally operate in other aspects of the dialogue of the crusades, notably among religious circles.

Women experienced a greater ability to engage with religious military orders within the Latin East than they did in the West. This rise appears to have been coupled with the rise of the cult of the Virgin. There is no conclusive evidence that this precipitated a demonstrably greater respect for the female voice within the Latin Church. Negotiation again forms an aspect of female agency in crusading that experienced a decline in the thirteenth-century. Many modern historians have placed great emphasis on the actions of individuals such as Margaret of Provence. While this thesis did use Margaret as an example of outstanding female leadership, yet, with regards to negotiations, it concluded that she is anomalous. The dearth of women negotiators in the 1200s further highlights the need for greater academic study of women's changing position within the Frankish Levant in the thirteenth-century.

³⁸⁷ Guy de Lusignan's actions were not dissimilar to Alexander the Great's decision to force many of his officers to marry Iranian aristocrats at Susa in order to bind them to his empire. In the case of Alexander, this decision caused much dissention and many of the marriages were dissolved after his death. Alexander's reasoning for this act and the effects of it have drawn a great amount of academic attention. One of the main threads of this discussion has been Alexander's desire for, 'fusion of Asia and Europe'. For more on Alexander's policy, see: W.W. Tam, *Alexander the Great: Narrative*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1948, p. 111. Scholarship on the Frankish settlement of Cyprus could benefit from closer scrutiny of Guy's similar policy, and the influences of women in it.

Instances of women adopting male-dominated gender roles were by no means unique to the Latin States. However, it is the frequency with which this occurred within Outremer that is unparalleled in medieval Latin society. This study has proven that in the later twelfth-century women throughout the Outremer became empowered in a number of ways. I have frequently referred to this period as the peak on a bell curve of female emancipation. Women experienced greater freedoms than their contemporaries in Europe in the years preceding the peak of the bell curve, and fewer freedoms following the peak. There is some indication that a reassertion of the patriarchal constructs occurred in the Latin East in the thirteenth-century, and was an active movement to repress the empowered status women had obtained in the twelfth-century. Yet, it is difficult to prove conclusively that this was a united, conscious effort by the Frankish Levantine population. This thesis has furthered the idea that the Latin States were proto European colonies, with their own culture unique from that of western Europe. This distinctiveness would not only have been palpable in their economic system, their customs, and art, but also their very attitude to gender. Even to this day, gender roles are often thought of in simple binary terms. This has often lead popular opinion to consider the people of the Middle Ages to have been rigidly conservative in their views on sex and gender. However, this thesis has shown that this was not necessarily the case, and that gender-roles could indeed be more fluid than previously thought.

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